



Munch and his World: Graphic Arts and the Avant-garde in Paris and Berlin

Edited by Giulia Bartrum

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The British
Museum

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*Munch and his World: Graphic Arts and the Avant-garde
in Paris and Berlin*

Edited by Giulia Bartrum

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Front cover: Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour
lithograph, 413mm x 572mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo,
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Contents

Director's Foreword <i>Hartwig Fischer, British Museum</i>	iv
Director's Foreword <i>Stein Olav Hennrichsen, MUNCH</i>	v
Introduction <i>Giulia Bartrum</i>	1
1. Eugène Carrière and Max Klinger: Two Symbolist Printmakers within the Orbit of Munch <i>Anna Schultz</i>	5
2. Edvard Munch and the Artists of <i>La Revue Blanche</i>: Promoting Prints in Late 19th-century French Avant-garde Journals <i>Jennifer Ramkalawon</i>	18
3. <i>L'Ymagier</i>, Munch and the Woodcut Technique <i>Ute Kuhlemann Falck</i>	37
4. Sick Girls, Sick Women, Sick Prints <i>Allison Morehead</i>	52
5. There and Not-there: Edvard Munch's Photographic Interruptions <i>Patricia G. Berman</i>	68
Contributors	90
Bibliography	91
Index	95

Director's Foreword

We are delighted to present *Munch and his World: Graphic Arts and the Avant-garde in Paris and Berlin*, a publication which stems directly from research and ideas inspired by the successful Munch exhibition displayed at the British Museum in 2019, *Edvard Munch: love and angst*. The exhibition, supported by AKO Foundation, focused on Munch's remarkable prints of the 1890s and early 1900s which effectively established his reputation. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Wakefield Trust for their support of this publication.

The essays published here delve further into Munch's innovative techniques, his interest in photography and the nature of the printmaking scene in Paris and Berlin, which forms the backdrop to his sudden popularity. It was in these cities, not his birthplace Kristiania (re-named Oslo in 1925), where his earliest and most remarkable prints were created. The high value attached to black and white etchings had already been established by artists such as James McNeill Whistler, Anders Zorn and Charles Meryon. The sophisticated taste of print collectors is evident from the accomplished suites of prints by Max Klinger, who gave them 'Opus' numbers in the manner of a composer; or of the atmospheric lithographs by Eugène Carrière. Above all, the proliferation of art journals published in major cities across Europe widened the opportunities for the publication of a massive variety of prints. It was this that effectively introduced young avant-garde artists to an avid collectors' market. For Edvard Munch, the publication of his lithograph *The Scream* in *La Revue Blanche* set him on a course of international fame.

It is with great pleasure that we recall the wonderful collaboration with the Munch Museum in Oslo which enabled the substantial loan of prints to the British Museum 2019 exhibition and has generously supported the reproduction of Munch's art in this publication. We look forward to working with MUNCH, as it is now known since opening at a new site on Oslo fjord, in the future.

Hartwig Fischer
Director, British Museum

Director's Foreword

MUNCH holds almost 27,000 art works, which were generously bequeathed by Edvard Munch upon his death in 1944 to the City of Oslo. After being housed in the relatively humble museum in Tøyen Oslo for the past six decades, the collection has recently moved into new, modern premises, spectacularly located on the city's fjord.

Now we at MUNCH can display more artworks than ever before, finally doing justice to one of the greatest artists of modernism. At the same time, it is still highly important for us to bring Edvard Munch's generous gift to the world – as it has always been and will be so in the future. Amongst the numerous loans MUNCH has facilitated over the last decades, the collaboration with the British Museum will always be warmly remembered. The mutual respect on both personal and professional levels, combined with dedication and thorough scholarship, culminated in the wonderful print exhibition *Edvard Munch: love and angst* in 2019.

As sad as it has been to see the conclusion of such an exhibition, we, fortunately, are able to treasure its legacy. It may be too early to say whether any of Munch's prints may have inspired any future Jaspar Jones or Tracey Emin, but the scholarship on Edvard Munch has significantly grown thanks to the exhibition. Not only can we refer to the impressive exhibition catalogue, brilliantly edited by Giulia Bartrum, but also now to this latest publication, which brings together the papers held at the exhibition's symposium 'Munch and his World', which took place at the British Museum in June 2019. It is gratifying to see that the fruits of our collaboration are still growing, and we look forward, with excitement, to the potential of joint projects in the future.

Stein Olav Henrichsen
Director, MUNCH

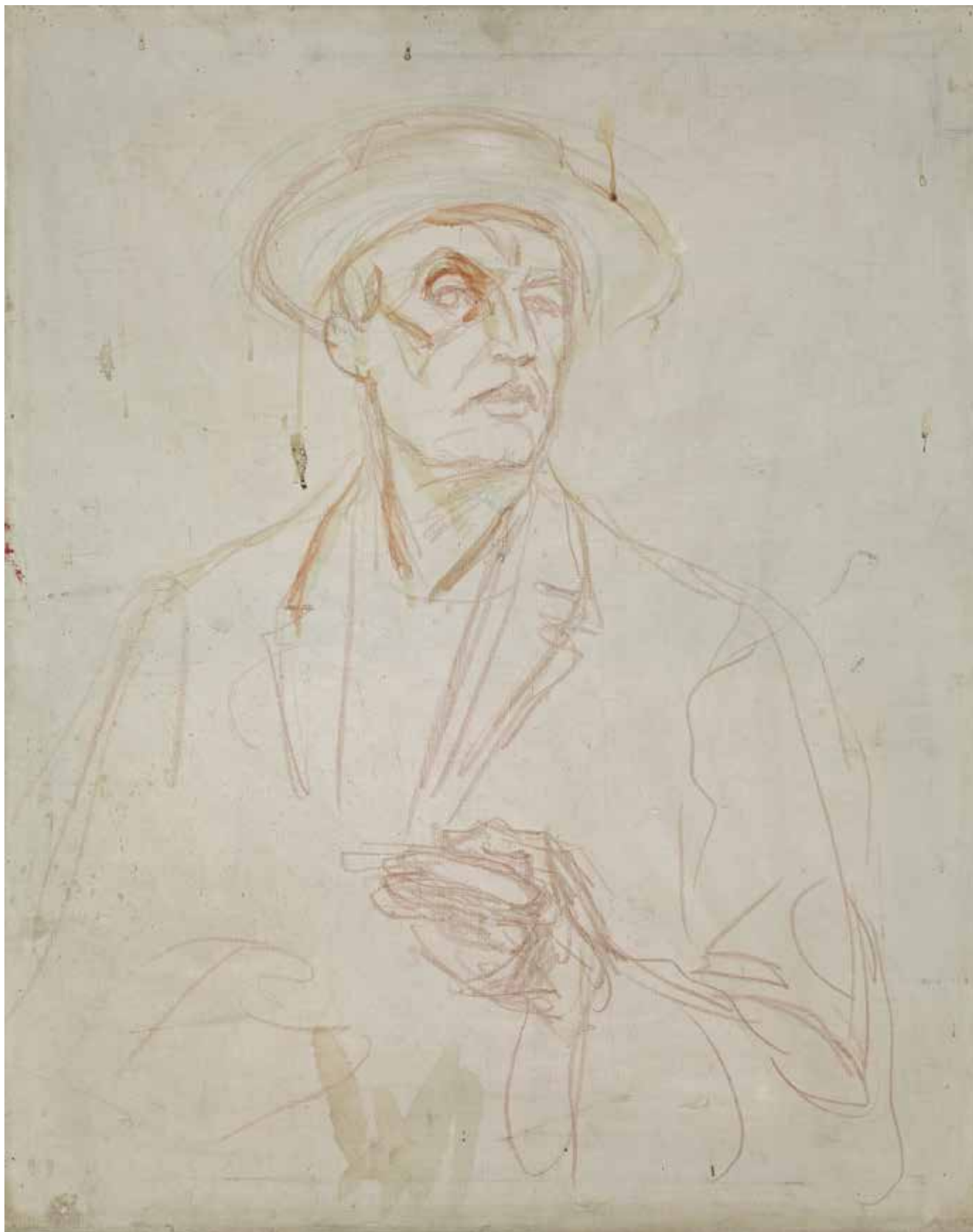


Figure 1 Edvard Munch, *Self-portrait with Afflicted Eye*, 1930, charcoal, oil and crayon(?) on canvas, 900mm x 720mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.M.00207. Photo by Ove Kvavik

Introduction

Giulia Bartrum¹

Reflections on the late 19th-century society of the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944) formed the keystone of the exhibition *Edvard Munch: love and angst* presented at the British Museum in 2019, in collaboration with the Munch Museum, Oslo.² The main themes of the exhibition centred around Munch's artistic response in print to the cultural and social dilemmas of his time. His most powerful art expresses a deeply personal approach to sickness, death, love, jealousy and despair. These emotions resonate strongly today, in a world besieged by anxiety surrounding a pandemic caused by a new virus. Much was made of Munch's universal and unforgettable image of *The Scream*, which formed a centrepiece of the exhibition, and its association with mental illness. When Munch painted *The Scream* in 1893, he intended it to be a personal expression of his state of mind; yet since the publication of the lithograph in 1895, it has been used on many occasions as commentary on political and social events, such as the election of Donald Trump in 2016.³ When the exhibition opened in April 2019, the image was seized upon by the press and used as a cartoon in response to the political handling of Brexit.⁴ Its universal and continued appeal serves equally well for reactions to the pandemic of Covid19 in 2020–1.

This publication presents a collection of five essays that were all stimulated by the main themes of *Edvard Munch: love and angst*. The exhibition focused on a superb range of the artist's prints representing the most idiosyncratic and innovative side to his work, which were chiefly done during the 1890s and the first decade of the 20th century. Munch's art is striking for the originality of its themes, which cross moments in place and time. While he is often, quite justifiably, shown as a major precursor of 20th-century modern art, especially German Expressionism, the key aim of the 2019 exhibition was to demonstrate how his emotive images, as interpreted in his prints, were closely associated with the prevailing ideas of the 1880s and 1890s, yet also formed a link with the traditional subjects and techniques of Old Master woodcuts and engravings. The essays published here probe deeper into Munch's relationship with the avant-garde, and show how he used Symbolist subjects of the period to develop his own visual language. They also explore how he was enabled and stimulated in this process through technical advances in printing and photography. Four of the chapters stem from papers delivered at the symposium 'Munch and his World', which took place at the British Museum in June 2019, one month before the exhibition closed, so that attendees had the opportunity to view the works on display while reflecting on the ideas presented by the speakers. The fifth paper, 'Edvard Munch and the artists of *La Revue Blanche*: promoting prints in late 19th-century French avant-garde journals' (see Chapter 2), is the result of new work done on an important acquisition made by the British Museum in 2018. In connection with research and early publicity for *Edvard Munch: love and angst*, a virtually complete set of the French journal *La Revue Blanche* (1889–1900) was acquired through the generosity of James A. and Laura M. Duncan. This journal was one of many that played a major part in the development of the avant-garde by publishing prints of and articles about artists of Munch's generation.

The chapters are arranged in roughly chronological order, to enable a wider appreciation of the sequence of new ideas and influences during the course of Munch's career. Symbolism was the chief language of the avant-garde across Europe when Munch started producing prints in Berlin in 1894. The success of the narrative suites of engravings by the Symbolist artist Max Klinger, who was well known in Munch's native Kristiania (renamed Oslo in 1925), was evident to Munch during his formative years. The impact of his powerful imagery on Munch is summarily explored in the exhibition catalogue *Edvard Munch: Love and Angst*,⁵ and examined further in Chapter 1, by Anna Schultz, who takes a closer look at Klinger's association with Munch. She also considers the impact on Munch of the prints of Eugène Carrière, who occupied a similarly influential position in Paris. Their work is very different in style, yet both are typical of the older generation, and Schultz's discussion widens the background scene further than was possible within the scope of the exhibition. Munch's connections with these artists were both tangible, as in the case of Klinger, who he probably knew well, and hypothetical – yet plausible – in the case of Carrière, whose technique and subject matter provide provocative clues as to how Munch developed his own inimitable style.

In Chapter 2 Jennifer Ramkalawon takes an article about *The Scream* as her starting point for a discussion of *La Revue Blanche*. It was a report in this journal that transformed Munch from an oddball Norwegian, unpopular in his home town of Kristiania and deeply criticised in Berlin, into an artist of international renown. By publishing a review in 1895 of a solo exhibition of Munch's works in Kristiania, and reproducing his lithograph *The Scream* – which, it must be emphasised, was the first of Munch's works to be reproduced in any publication anywhere – the editor, Thadée Natanson, effectively re-shaped Munch's career. Ramkalawon's detailed account of *La Revue Blanche* and other French journals of the period considerably widens our understanding of the cultural milieu in which Munch's prints first appeared. They were aimed at the increasing numbers of art enthusiasts who belonged to the burgeoning middle class, and became a critical vehicle for the promotion of emerging artists, including Pierre Vollard, Édouard Vuillard and the Nabis. They also published literary reviews of avant-garde plays, such as the work of Henrik Ibsen when first performed in Paris, whose dramas were of critical significance to Munch.⁶ Like other journals, *La Revue Blanche* published original prints within its pages, and as separate issues, on a variety of papers to cater for different markets. It also held exhibitions of artists' prints for sale at its offices. Ramkalawon shows how the close friendship between the group of editors, artists and authors who worked for *La Revue Blanche* sustained the success of this particular project, which was one of the longest-running journals of its type during the period.

Another Parisian art journal, *L'Ymagier*, is the focus of Chapter 3, in which Ute Kuhlemann Falck takes a deeper look at potential sources of inspiration for Munch's idiosyncratic woodcut style. Although it appeared for only two years, from 1894 to 1896, this Catholic journal published an unusual mix of reproductions of famous Old Master

prints, original prints by young Symbolist artists and re-strikes of early 19th-century stencils – coloured popular woodcuts. Such a journal may seem of niche interest to a modern audience, and indeed its short run does not indicate a resounding success. Yet its focus on prints of specific types played a significant role within a culture that viewed all print techniques as important means of broadcasting information about art and artists. As Camille Pissarro pointed out in a letter to his son Lucien, 'No one pays attention nowadays to anything but prints; it's a rage, the young generation produce nothing else'.⁷ Art journals across Europe played a pivotal role in shaping the market for high-quality single-sheet prints. Kuhlemann Falck's analysis of the development of Munch's strikingly large and colourful woodcuts through the impact of the brightly coloured reprints of early 19th-century broadsides in *L'Ymagier* is intriguing, especially when one considers that Munch made his earliest woodcuts in 1896 when *L'Ymagier* was still being published. Her emphasis on the importance of periodicals and journals to Munch himself supports this argument: the huge number of newspaper cuttings that the artist carefully maintained in his own library can be studied today at the Munch Museum.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Allison Morehead and Patricia G. Berman delve further into Munch's particular approach to sickness by exploring methods and meaning behind his representation of sickrooms and images of himself when afflicted with illness. Munch's work is replete with references to the particular scourges of his era, especially venereal disease and tuberculosis. The early deaths of his mother when he was five and his sister Sophie when he was 13 had a profound effect on him, the latter resulting in the production of his painting *The Sick Child* (1885–6), which had a dramatic impact on the course of his career (Chapter 4, **Fig. 61**). In the exhibition *Edvard Munch: love and angst*, these episodes formed the main theme of a group of prints in a section entitled 'Sickness and Death'. Munch's writings reveal a trail of anxious thoughts when describing periods of ill health, often recorded in diary notes, as in this entry from 1880, a few years after the death of his sister:

For over a month now I have been sick with the flu. It started at the end of last month with a cold brought upon me by bad weather. Saturday the 21st I had a fever and had to lie down. Monday I got up again, was up two days, had a relapse with a pretty strong fever and had to lie down again. The next day some blood followed the spitting. Had to be very careful ... Wasn't able to get up until about 2 weeks ago. I'm still convalescing, have heart palpitations and some sweating, but the coughing is almost gone and all is indeed going forward.⁸

In Chapter 4 Allison Morehead considers further the artist's relationship with sickness, paying particular attention to his representations of women and children. As the son and brother of doctors, Morehead argues that Munch's close familiarity with the sickroom encouraged him to go way further than the fashionable 'pillow scenes' much loved by his contemporaries, and portray acute illness as an essential part of the human condition, to be memorialised in its own right. The violent array of colours – especially shades of red and orange – used in numerous impressions of his lithograph of *The Sick Child* resonates

strongly with what was to late 19th-century society a generic fear of blood and its association with tuberculosis. That Munch was able to play around with the lithographic effects of varying shades of colour is testament to the remarkable skills of the printer Auguste Clot, who, along with a few other printers in Berlin and Paris in the late 19th century, set himself apart from the big commercial printers of the day by collaborating with publishers and artists to create prints of superlative aesthetic effects.

Munch's detailed notes about his own symptoms of illness also manifested themselves in moments of objective self-examination in his portraits, such as when he was suffering from the Spanish flu in 1919 (Chapter 5, **Fig. 83**)⁹ and later, in a self-portrait of 1930, as he strained to focus on the canvas following the rupture of a blood vessel in his right eye that caused a temporary loss of sight (**Fig. 1**).¹⁰ In Chapter 5 Patricia G. Berman describes how this episode gave rise to some three dozen studies, mostly in watercolour, in which Munch made an extraordinary effort to record not just the physical damage to his eye, but also to analyse his altered perception of the world. For Munch as a painter, the potential loss of his sight was evidently as frightening a prospect as was the loss of hearing to the composer Ludwig van Beethoven. Berman also delves further into 'interruptions' to the field of vision in a discussion of Munch's experiments with photography, and shows how ghostly shadows and blurred outlines, created by varying exposure times, produce atmospheric effects and suggest symbolic meaning that is paralleled in his prints – especially the woodcuts – as well as his wider body of work. Such detailed exploration into Munch's methods emphasises how his work differed from that of his contemporaries, and positions his art firmly in the 20th century.

The essays published here about Edvard Munch and his contemporaries are given additional focus through recent exhibitions in London since *Edvard Munch: love and angst* was held at the British Museum. The first solo exhibition of work by the Finnish artist Helene Schjerfbeck (1862–1946) to take place in the UK was at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2019.¹¹ Little known outside her native country where she is highly popular, she has been described as a 'Finnish Munch'. An unhappy life expressed itself in unusual portraits that seem to internalise emotions and radiate solitary feelings. The wide-eyed intensity of her self-portraits reflects a melancholic mood that is easily paralleled in self-portraits by Munch; neither artist ever represented themselves smiling.¹² Of particular interest too were exhibitions devoted to Félix Vallotton (1865–1925) and Léon Spilliaert (1881–1946), neither of whom is widely known in the UK.¹³ The Belgian artist Spilliaert was a loner, much like Munch, and also prone to bouts of ill health. He dropped out of a traditional art academy education and did not conform to accepted norms of the art world popularised by the French Impressionists. His haunting images of single figures on shorelines lost in thought or anxiously looking out to sea reflect similar preoccupations to those of Munch, and reveal an intense introspection possibly stimulated by scientific and philosophic values of the day that showed – as in Munch's work – a propensity towards analysing the inner self. Both artists felt a strong affinity with Friedrich

Nietzsche. Spilliaert drew a striking portrait of the philosopher in 1901, entitled *Ecce Homo*, which, like Munch's portrait of 1906, has a characteristic high forehead, stern expression and handlebar moustache. Both were most likely based on widely circulated postcards and photographs.¹⁴ For the purposes of the present publication, the most pertinent factor about the Swiss artist Vallotton is that he popularised a range of landscapes, street views, portraits and theatrically dramatic subjects in starkly simplified woodcuts that were well suited to reproduction in art journals. The small scale and uniform style of Vallotton's woodcuts could not have been further from Munch's idiosyncratic prints, but the tumult of inner thoughts represented by a head in profile turned away or the back view of a figure resonates with Munch's portrayal of anguish and emotional turmoil. Both artists shared a propensity to use stage-like settings to emphasise the drama of a moment within enclosed spaces, seen at curious angles. Vallotton became a leading illustrator for *La Revue Blanche*, which in 1899 published a limited edition of what has become his most popular suite of woodcuts, *Intimités*. As for Munch, Ramkalawon's article makes it clear that despite the initial publicity for his work in *La Revue Blanche*, he never became closely involved with contributing prints for art journals. He did, however, read them avidly, and it was through these publications that he was familiar with the work of Vallotton and all the other artists mentioned in the present book.

In *Edvard Munch: love and angst* the generous collaboration of the Munch Museum in Oslo enabled the British Museum to exhibit the artist's most famous prints of his early career to an audience best familiar with them through reproduction. The aim was to position this work within an account of his career and the tumultuous episodes of his personal life. The articles published here provide a wider context for Munch's remarkable body of prints by examining the print world in Paris and Berlin in more detail to show how he benefited from it, and how younger artists and the whole cultural scene profited too. It is clear that Munch made full use of the highly sophisticated printers who had already set Symbolist artists such as Odilon Redon, Eugène Carrière and Max Klinger on course in a market avid for the single-sheet print. Munch's subjects were close enough to the Symbolist world for his work to gain recognition, yet they exuded a powerful and dramatic singularity. His very personal use of photography exemplifies a novel approach that set him apart from his contemporaries. A close examination of the art journals of Munch's time makes it clear that these were a critical factor in the dissemination of artistic and literary ideas across Europe and considerably widened the market. What the exhibition and the following essays make clear is how Munch's remarkable prints attracted their own avant-garde group of collectors, who had themselves been stimulated to study and broaden their interest in prints from the huge number of art journals available to all.

Notes

- 1 The editor would like to thank Grant Lewis, the Getty Paper Project curatorial fellow in the Department of Prints and Drawings, for his diligent assistance at an early stage of this project.

- 2 Bartrum 2019; the Munchmuseet is now known as MUNCH since the collections moved to a new site on Oslo fjord in 2020.
- 3 Cartoon design for *The Times*, 21 January, 2017 by Peter Brookes following the inauguration of Donald J. Trump as president of the U.S.A. (British Museum, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2017-7012-1).
- 4 'I felt a great scream throughout the country', cartoon design by Christian Adams for the *Evening Standard*, 21 March 2019 (British Museum, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2019-7027-1).
- 5 Bartrum 2019, 74–7, 135.
- 6 See Coppel 2019, 96–127.
- 7 For Camille Pissarro's letter written in Paris in 1897 to his son Lucien in London, see Roos de Carvalho and Vellekoop 2013, 11.
- 8 Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM T 2913, p. 18, dated 30 March 1880; with thanks to Ute Kuhlemann Falck and her colleagues at the Munchmuseet for the English translation.
- 9 Woll 2009, III, cat. 1296.
- 10 *Self-portrait with Afflicted Eye*, 1930; Woll 2009, IV, cat. 1674.
- 11 Von Bonsdorff 2019.
- 12 Helene Schjerfbeck, *Self-portrait with Palette*, 1937. Modern Museum, Stockholm; see Adriaens-Panner and Locke 2020, 39, fig. 19.
- 13 Amory and Dumas 2019; Adriaens-Pannier and Locke 2020.
- 14 Spilliaert drew three portraits of Nietzsche during 1900–1, see Adriaens-Panner and Locke 2020, 44, fig. 22, 160, fig. 33; for Munch's painting and lithograph of Nietzsche of 1906, see Bartrum 2019, 32, fig. 3, 202.

Chapter 1

Eugène Carrière and Max Klinger: Two Symbolist Printmakers within the Orbit of Munch

Anna Schultz

Munch is frequently described as a solitary artist, struggling with either his own demons or those he thought possessed others. During the 10-year period between 1885 and 1895, however, he travelled extensively through Germany and France. In Berlin and Paris, in particular, he made the acquaintance of a number of fellow artists, especially printmakers, many of whom were inspired by his work.¹ Likewise, noteworthy echoes of works created in Munch's orbit can be found in his own prints. This cross-pollination of artistic thoughts, themes, topics and ideas between a plethora of contemporary artists has been discussed in relation to the more famous figures of the era, but deserves closer examination with regard to the Symbolist printmakers Eugène Carrière (1849–1906) and Max Klinger (1857–1920). These two artists were at the centre of the art scenes in France and Germany respectively, and their artistic output contains manifold hints, allusions and more direct connections with Munch's creations.

In the very brief handwritten curriculum vitae Munch submitted upon his appointment as a foreign member of the Berlin Akademie der Künste in 1923 under the presidency of Max Liebermann, he states that he 'briefly studied in Paris in 1884 or 1885' and that he regarded his visits to France and Italy as 'study trips'.² For inspiration, Munch studied the Old Masters, whose works he went to see in museums, but equally contemporaries, including Léon Bonnat, with whom he studied drawing for a few months in 1889, as well as Auguste Rodin and Paul Gauguin.

Encounters with Eugène Carrière in Paris

Visual allegiances between the works of the painter and printmaker Eugène Carrière and those of Munch have been hinted at repeatedly in passing, but, somewhat surprisingly, they have been generally overlooked.³ After his premature death in 1906, Carrière quickly disappeared from art-historical and critical discussions. His vast artistic legacy, which includes more than 100 paintings in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay alone, remained largely unstudied for decades. Indeed, the majority were only presented to the public fairly recently, most notably in an exhibition pairing them with sculptures and drawings by his close friend and collector of his works, Auguste Rodin.⁴

When Munch arrived in Paris, however, the situation was very different. Carrière, some years Munch's senior, was at the height of his career, receiving solo exhibitions and important commissions, all while running a flourishing art school, the Académie Carrière, which was the artistic cradle of Henri Matisse and Dora Hitz among many others. His role at the epicentre of the Paris art scene could hardly have been more prominent.

Carrière painted in a very recognisable style, with a palette invariably limited to tones of brown and grey. His subject matter was equally restricted, and throughout his career he focused almost exclusively on portraiture and a long succession of variations of *maternités*. Unsurprisingly, his works polarised his audience and critics, resulting in mixed reviews. Some avid enthusiasts, such as the poet Jean Dolent, saw in them 'realities with the magic of dreams', admiring the works precisely for their distinctive appearance and limited palette, which, he argued, captured



Figure 2 Eugène Carrière, *L'Enfant malade (2)* ('The Sick Child'), 1885, oil on canvas, 1010mm x 820mm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 2402. ©RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

the essence of transcendental feelings and emotions.⁵ Others were less impressed, questioning Carrière's ability to see colour, while finding little enthusiasm for the way in which his forms seemed to emerge from their backgrounds and melt into each other. James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Edgar Degas both used remarkably similar words when they summed up Carrière's paintings in 1892 with their laconic and much-cited comments about the reprehensible behaviour of smoking in nurseries.⁶

Munch's opinion of Carrière is undocumented, but we can safely assume that he was aware of the latter's paintings and lithographs. In fact, it is possible that Munch's various compositions on the topic of 'the sick child' were triggered by seeing Carrière's *L'Enfant Malade (2)* ('The Sick Child') (**Fig. 2**).⁷ This painting, which had earned Carrière a *médaille de 3^e classe* in 1885, was on view when Munch was in Paris for three weeks in May of that year, on a packed itinerary that saw him visit the Salon, the Musée du Louvre and as many artists as possible. The following year, Munch completed the first of several painted versions of *The Sick Child* (see Chapter 4, **Fig. 61**), a subject that he revisited years later in Berlin when he made a drypoint in 1894 (**Fig. 3**).⁸

Admittedly, Munch's rendering is not similar: the child is older, the mother's face is not visible and, most strikingly, the overall sentiment is very different. Where Carrière creates a poetic image, focusing on the intimate and tender relationship between mother and child as a means of highlighting the hope of recovery aided by motherly love, Munch's image is more sombre. Here, the death of the girl seems imminent and the mother is desperate – not surprisingly, as the image serves as a painful reminder of the passing away of Munch's own sister. Visually, however,



Figure 3 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1894, drypoint and roulette, 628mm x 447mm. British Museum, 1949,0411.4792

Carrière's painting appears to be as equally related to Munch's as the more famous depiction of the same subject, albeit without the mother, painted in 1881 by Munch's mentor Christian Krohg, which has frequently been cited as a source.⁹ Munch was certainly aware of Krohg's painting, but was apparently unwilling to acknowledge its influence on him. In 1933 he wrote to the Director of the National Gallery in Oslo, Jens Thiis, rejecting the latter's suggestion that Krohg had inspired him, claiming instead that his painting reflected the then-current zeitgeist, a period he referred to as 'the pillow time', when many artists painted sick children reclining on pillows.¹⁰

Among Carrière's most widely discussed and sought-after works were prints that formed the so-called *panthéon*. This ambitious project, which Carrière pursued between 1893 and 1900, consisted of a loose series of large-scale portraits of friends and acquaintances whom he considered to be the cultural élite: authors and artists worthy of being memorialised in a series of lithographs. Carrière employed a signature technique for which he coined the phrase *manière noire*, covering the whole stone with a thin layer of black wash (*lavis*), which he then polished and textured with glass wool or sandpaper. This process helped model the forms so that they emerge without clear outlines like ghostly shadows from the surrounding darkness.¹¹ Different impressions show the profound and varied effect of the delicate inking, its soft vibrancy imitating the style of Carrière's oil paintings.

Jean Dolent, Puvis de Chavannes, Paul Verlaine, Edmond de Goncourt (**Fig. 4**), Henri Rochefort¹² and Rodin were among those immortalised as sitters. The dancer Isadora Duncan was the only woman Carrière considered worthy of joining their ranks, but for unknown



Figure 4 Eugène Carrière, *Portrait of Edmond de Goncourt*, 1896, lithograph, 537mm x 418mm. British Museum, 2020,7034.1



Figure 5 Edvard Munch, *Portrait of August Strindberg*, 1896, lithograph, 600mm x 460mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00219-04. Photo by Ove Kvavik

reasons her printed portrait was never executed, although he painted her between 1900 and 1902.¹³ Carrière was a professionally trained lithographer who had developed and perfected his specialist technique over the years, working very closely with highly skilled printers at Lemercier & Cie in Paris who, his correspondence makes clear, had to work hard to meet the artist's requirements.¹⁴ For optimum, nuanced impressions of the *manière noire* lithographs, the

stone needed to be inked with much care, applying more ink in the darker areas without smudging the fine lines. Like Carrière, Munch also established an intensive working relationship with his printers, and correspondence has survived giving details of his association with Lemercier.¹⁵

Munch's portrait of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg (**Fig. 5**), in which the face of the author is hovering in the centre with his piercing gaze directed at the



Figure 6 Eugène Carrière, *Le Sommeil* ('Sleep'), 1897, lithograph, 429mm x 338mm. British Museum, 2013,7054.1



Figure 7 Edvard Munch, *Madonna*, 1895, lithograph, 600mm x 440mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00194-127. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård



Figure 8 Eugène Carrière, *Buste de jeune fille (Marguerite)* ('Bust of a Young Girl (Marguerite)'), 1890, lithograph, 302mm x 244mm. British Museum, 1949,0411.3182



Figure 9 Eugène Carrière, *Marguerite Carrière*, 1901, lithograph, 430mm x 343mm. British Museum, 1913,0617.10

viewer, is overall rougher in appearance, perhaps due to a less refined technique.¹⁶ Its effect, however, is connected to Carrière's *panthéon* prints: the figure is set against a black background and some of the lines – notably in the region of the hair – are scratched into the lithographic ink. It is known that in 1896 the collector Axel Heiberg attempted to persuade Munch to make a portfolio of portrait prints and that Munch expressed interest. Although this portfolio was never issued, comparisons can be made with Munch's portrait of *Hans Jæger* (1896),¹⁷ and his lithograph portrait of *Mallarmé*,¹⁸ which was executed the following year.¹⁹ Visually, *Self-portrait with the Skeleton Arm* (1895) is equally comparable.²⁰

Munch seems to have aimed for effects in his lithographs that almost mimic Carrière's technique, and also in a handful of mezzotints he created in 1896, such as his *Standing Nude*, barely visible yet strangely seductive.²¹ The use of *lavis* and thin scratched lines was developed further by Munch in a more expressionistic sense in *Attraction I* (1896), printed by Auguste Clot with whom Carrière also worked in Paris in 1896/7.²² Carrière's *Le Sommeil* ('Sleep') (1897),²³ a portrait of his son Jean-René sleeping, which was published by Ambroise Vollard in *L'Album d'Estampes Originales*, strikingly illustrates Clot's skill (Fig. 6). The large black areas are evenly printed, while the fine scratches, apparent in white, are never smudged.

Generally speaking, the resemblance between Munch and Carrière seems closest with regard to the artists' portraits of women: Munch's iconic *Madonna* was first conceived as an oil painting in 1893, developed into a drypoint the following year and published as a black and white lithograph in 1895 (Fig. 7).²⁴ It was not published in

various colour impressions until 1902. Focusing on the Madonna's face, one can detect remarkable reminiscences with Carrière's *Buste de jeune fille* ('Bust of a Young Girl'),²⁵ a portrait of his daughter Marguerite (1890) (Fig. 8), both in the eyes that are set deeply into the skull and in the long flowing hair that blends into the background. Both women are apparitions, emerging from the darkness surrounding them, yet in their mood they could hardly be more different: whereas Munch presents us with a *femme fatale*, a sumptuous, longing, loving, but also death-bringing, woman at the moment of conception (as indicated by the sperm and fearsome-looking crouching embryo), Carrière's woman is mask-like, remote and untouchable, with none of the presence of Munch's. In 1901 Carrière revisited the subject and made another lithograph of Marguerite (Fig. 9).²⁶ Here one can determine a noticeable shift from a portrait of a child to a more ambiguous depiction of a young woman, seemingly harking back to Munch's *Madonna*. As in his many *maternités*, Carrière certainly tried to reach for an evocation of a transient expression, mysterious and less tangible, transcending a subjective response, and evoking in true Symbolist fashion something non-material. A subliminal response to Carrière's images was at times effectively employed to promote the combat of very tangible problems, notably the spreading of diseases and the resulting infant mortality: a *tableau d'intérieur* (indoor information poster), directed specifically at mothers and published jointly in 1904 by the faculty of medicine and the Institut Pasteur for biomedical research, relied on a reproduction of one of Carrière's painted *maternités* (Fig. 10). Pointing out women's power and underlining their responsibility for the safekeeping of their own health and that of their children



Figure 10 Poster published by *Le Matin* reproducing Eugène Carrière's *L'Amour Maternel* ('Maternal Love'), 1904, 660mm x 500mm. Private collection, Berlin

and husbands, it outlined the need to follow a set of hygiene rules in order to avoid or combat the symptoms and spreading of illnesses such as typhoid, diarrhoea, tuberculosis or diphtheria. The hands-on advice also instructed women about what to do after a family member had survived (or died from) a contagious disease: namely, to thoroughly disinfect sheets, surfaces and any objects touched by the patient.

The central motif, a chalk lithograph, shows a woman whose body and dress seem to melt into those of the sick toddler she is cradling. In contrast to Munch's seductive and somewhat eerie *Madonna*, the mother's hands are clasped and integrated into a swirling vortex shape that encircles the child like a cocoon. The child's hand is raised to the mother's face, his (or her) finger gently touching her lips as if to silence her, underlining the inherent calm and intimacy of the subject.

Although the commercial employment of Carrière's images is rare, there are a handful of occurrences where Carrière himself was involved with advertising, most famously in the large-scale lithographic poster of 1897

promoting the anarchist magazine *L'Aurore* (**Fig. 11**),²⁷ a particularly striking image with a strongly Munchesque feeling to it, harking back to the much more emotional *Scream*, a theme that occupied Munch between 1893 and 1910 (see **Fig. 51**). The positioning of the solitary figure in a landscape, the exalted gesture with dramatically raised hands, and the clouds lit in hues of orange radiating from the rising sun and swirling around the body are all visual echoes of Munch's most famous composition.

Despite these many visual parallels, no evidence has surfaced proving beyond doubt that Munch and Carrière ever met in person.²⁸ Their relationship can, however, be reconstructed by analysing a series of possible encounters.²⁹ In 1896, for example, the artists had consecutive solo exhibitions at Siegfried Bing's gallery, Maison de l'Art Nouveau, in Paris.³⁰ Other key figures featured prominently in both artists' lives, such as the aforementioned Rodin, the master printer Auguste Clot and the writer Stéphane Mallarmé. While Carrière attended a dinner that Mallarmé organised in honour of Paul Gauguin when the latter departed for Tahiti in 1891,³¹ Munch was absent, but

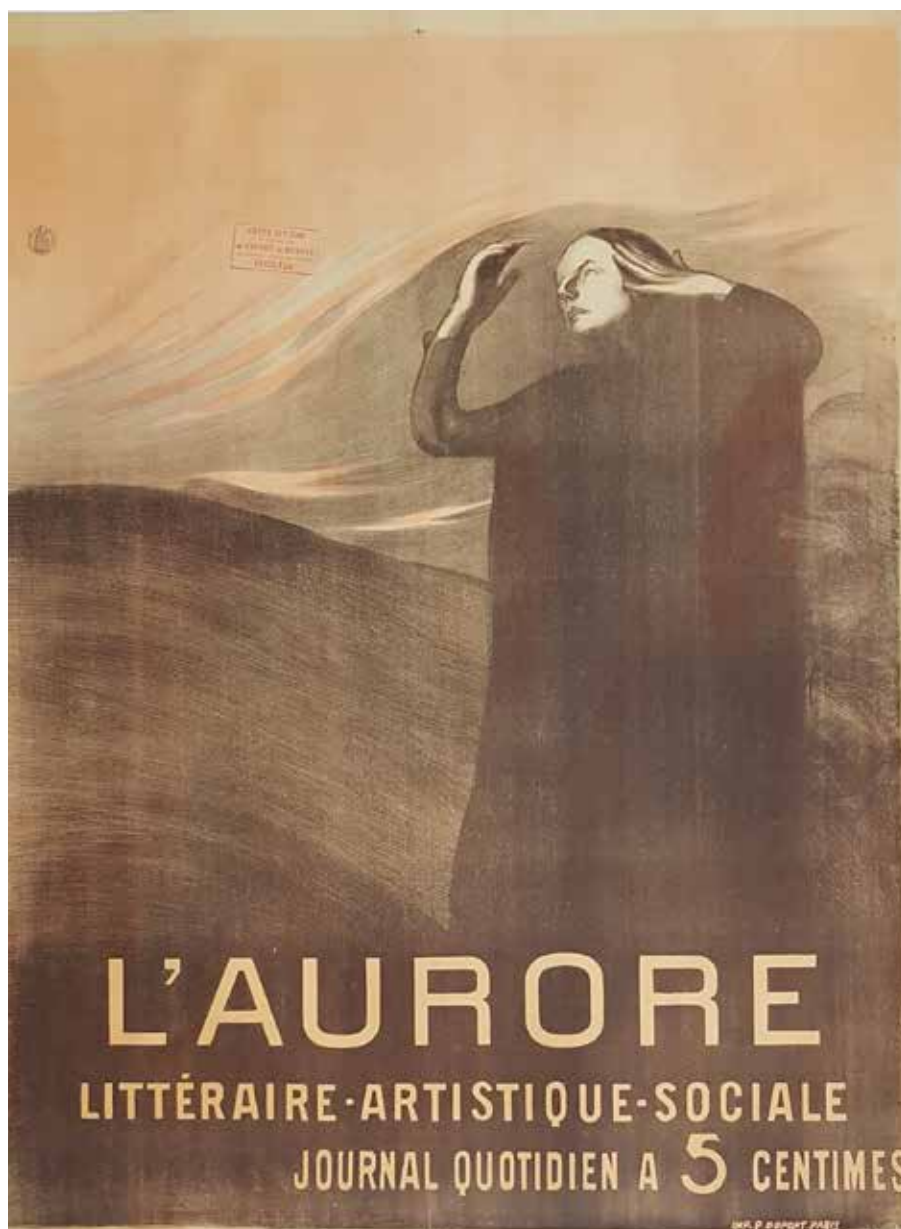


Figure 11 Eugène Carrière, poster for the magazine *L'Aurore*, 1897, colour lithograph, 2110mm x 1440mm. Private collection, Berlin

between 1896 and 1897 he regularly attended Mallarmé's Tuesday night soirées, and in 1897 Munch created a portrait lithograph of his host. By that time, however, Carrière's relationship with Mallarmé had cooled.

Another common acquaintance was the Norwegian painter Frits Thaulow, who first moved to Paris in 1892 and settled there permanently in 1898. He was a close associate of Carrière's, and a cousin and friendly supporter of Munch during his early career (his mother was Nina Munch). Munch and Thaulow are known to have collaborated on set designs for a performance of Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* (1867) in Paris in 1896.³² Another cousin, the painter Edvard Diriks, was an influential figure for Munch, acting as his promoter in Paris. Whether he took the initiative to introduce Munch to Carrière is unknown, but he must have been close to Carrière, for in 1910 he was invited by Rodin to a dinner at Meudon, which was held for friends in honour of Carrière to mark the fourth anniversary of the latter's death.

Another opportunity for a meeting would have occurred in 1899 when Julius Meier-Graefe asked Munch to contribute a print to *Germinal*, a portfolio of 20 prints by

outstanding contemporary printmakers, such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Carrière, to be published by his gallery, La Maison Moderne. The print Munch submitted, a woodcut entitled *Mystical Shore* (1897),³³ was considered too radically different and thus judged unsuitable, and Munch, whose health problems were beginning to emerge, did not send Meier-Graefe an etching as a replacement, as the publisher had requested. Although not represented, one may assume that Munch was familiar with the published portfolio, which included Carrière's *Maternité*,³⁴ a lithograph printed from three stones (Fig. 12). This image is perhaps not among Carrière's most successful designs, but nonetheless it serves as an archetypal example, a reminder of his favourite topic and proof of his mastery as a lithographer.

Encounters with Max Klinger in Berlin

While retracing Munch's steps and his influence on Parisian artists requires detective work and a reliance on visual analogies, the situation is more straightforward with regard to his interaction with many German artists. Munch arrived



Figure 12 Eugène Carrière, *Maternité (grande planche)* ('Maternity (large plate)'), 1899, lithograph, 402mm x 315mm. Private collection, Berlin

in Berlin in the autumn of 1892, and left visible and lasting marks on the cultural landscape.³⁵ It was in Germany, in 1894, that he also discovered printmaking as a medium, and produced his first lithographs and etchings, no doubt encouraged by the friendship, works and writings of Max Klinger. Although active as a painter and sculptor, Klinger was primarily a printmaker and master etcher, by far the most successful in Germany at the time.³⁶ In 1891 he published a treatise entitled *Malerei und Zeichnung* ('Painting and Drawing'), which famously formed the basis for the revival of the graphic arts in Germany and emphasised the power and purpose of prints, especially their ability to express sublime ideas due to the associations inspired by the lack of colour. This was a prospect that undoubtedly appealed to Munch.³⁷

On a more practical level, printmaking enabled artists to profit commercially and reach a wide audience: appealing aspects for anybody who was not only wishing to spread a mission or evoke a creative response from their audiences, but was also simultaneously trying to make a living or generate a considerable income. A large number of specialist publications, magazines and limited-edition portfolios,

aimed at a rapidly growing group of print enthusiasts and collectors, some of whom were organised in clubs and art societies,³⁸ had led to a flourishing of print production and publication (comparable perhaps to the etching revival in Britain), which Munch actively used to his advantage.

Munch was seemingly attracted by Klinger's art as well as his ideas, and in December 1896, shortly after making his first woodcuts, he mentioned in a letter to his aunt his plans to publish some prints in the form of a portfolio: 'I might publish some lithographs that should earn me some money.'³⁹ The portfolio, known as *The Mirror*, comprising 25 prints (20 lithographs and 5 woodcuts), was never published. The fact that Munch chose lithography for the majority of its constituent parts, as it allowed for a large edition to be printed with relatively little effort or cost, indicates that he was very aware of the potential of a rising interest and subsequent growing market for artists' prints.

The relationship between Klinger and Munch has frequently been observed and discussed. As early as December 1878 the Norwegian critic Georg Brandes noted similarities between their work in the newspaper *Dagbladet*, years before Munch travelled to Germany and met Klinger



Figure 13 Max Klinger, *Verlassen* ('Lost'), etching with aquatint, 440mm x 590mm, from *Ein Leben* ('A Life'), 1884. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung, A 479

in person.⁴⁰ Munch was indeed familiar with Klinger's oeuvre early on as etchings from Klinger's first two series, *Radierte Skizzen* and *Eva und die Zukunft*,⁴¹ had been exhibited in Kristiania, where he saw them. The impressions exhibited on that occasion belonged to the painter Christian Krohg, Munch's early supporter, who had also studied with Klinger in Karlsruhe. Interestingly, as pointed out by Giulia Bartrum, in 1882 Munch also made a drawn copy of Klinger's 1881 controversial painting *Der Tod am Wasser* (*Der pinkelnde Tod*) ('Death by the Water (Death Peeing)'), which was in Krohg's possession until 1885, when it was given to the writer and political activist Hans Jäger who used it to decorate his prison cell.⁴²

Munch later expressed his appreciation of Klinger: In France, Munch claimed, there was 'good art', but no individual artists as great as the ones on a list that he compiled and sent to the Danish painter Johan Rohde in 1893, such as Arnold Böcklin, Hans Thoma, Richard Wagner (among musicians), Friedrich Nietzsche (among philosophers) and Max Klinger.⁴³ Klinger primarily worked in etching and aquatint, and occasionally in mezzotint. He was also attracted to the seemingly gloomy *manière noire* style, which by the 1890s had become fashionable: apparitions from dark mysterious backgrounds, fuzzy figures, blurred lines and the melting of positive and negative forms were very much *en vogue*, having become signature features of Symbolist printmaking.⁴⁴ Interlinked and ideally suited for the pathos-laden, often dreamlike, subject matter, it had quickly grown into a stylistic phenomenon, which extended to other artistic areas, such as pictorialist photography and

sculpture, most notably in the blurred softness of Rodin's figures.⁴⁵ Klinger and Munch knew each other well and met regularly at the *Schwarzes Ferkel* ('Black Piglet') inn in Berlin, where they drank and exchanged ideas in a circle that also included August Strindberg, Julius Meier-Graefe, Richard Dehmel and Stanisław Przybyszewski.⁴⁶

Munch exhibited widely in Germany. When his exhibition in 1892 at the Verein Berliner Künstler caused such a scandal that it had to be closed down, this only enhanced his notoriety, which if anything kindled the admiration of his German colleagues. Klinger and Munch exhibited together on at least one occasion, at the 1902 Berlin Secession: Munch showed a frieze of paintings, a mirror of life, while in the centre of the gallery was a plaster study for Klinger's monumental *Beethoven* sculpture.⁴⁷

Whether this dialogue was initiated by the artists, or was the result of the committee's hang, cannot be determined. Although visually strikingly different, the works are comparable inasmuch as they are milestones on the path to creating an artistically ambitious *Gesamtkunstwerk* and, as such, with regard to their inherent function, analogies between Munch's paintings and Klinger's sculpture may possibly be drawn.

While formal comparisons between Munch and Carrière point to a subtle dialogue, Munch and Klinger entered a much more direct and immediate exchange of ideas relating to form and content. These echoes are deliberate and show that the two artists shared more than compositional taste. There are prominent themes to be found in both artists' oeuvres. This proximity is perhaps at its closest in Klinger's



Figure 14 Edvard Munch, *Two Human Beings: The Lonely Ones*, 1899, colour woodcut, 395mm x 550mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00601-43. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

Figure 15 Edvard Munch, *The Alley*, 1895, lithograph, 661mm x 491mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00197-21



most ambitious and possibly most evocative series, *Ein Leben*, *Opus VIII* ('A Life, Opus VIII') (1884),⁴⁸ a suite of 15 sheets that are loosely inspired by Krohg's scandalous novel *Albertine* (1886) and more generally depict the struggle of a 'fallen woman'. In *Verlassen* ('Lost') (Fig. 13), Klinger harks back to Caspar David Friedrich's iconic painting *Mönch am Meer* ('Monk by the Sea') (1808–10),⁴⁹ and manages to convey an image of solitude and loneliness that prefigures the intensity of many of Munch's prints. Such subjects were revisited frequently by Munch in the woodcuts he made after his return from Paris in 1897, adapted first in *Towards the Forest* (1897),⁵⁰ and possibly more directly in the woodcuts *Two Human Beings: The Lonely Ones* (Fig. 14)⁵¹ and *Moonlight by the Sea* (1912).⁵² Munch's lithograph *The Alley* (Fig. 15),⁵³ which shows a nude woman surrounded by men wearing top hats, can be compared to Klinger's *Gefesselt* ('Tied Up')⁵⁴ from the *Ein Leben* series (Fig. 16). Klinger's victim is tied up, surrounded by voyeurs, but the brutal exposure of the woman's body, portrayed here in sharp contrast to the anonymous mass of dressed men, is expressed in a comparable visual language. Unlike Munch, Klinger is much more connected to a visual and (con)textual narrative in which the prints should be read. However, *Ein Leben*, on which he worked for almost a decade, was not initially perceived as a succession of images nor intended to be published as a series.⁵⁵ The prints were not executed to follow the sequence indicated by the text, and they vary with

regard to format and technique. They are evocative, but leave much room for the audience's interpretation. Although clearly referring to Krohg's novel as a concrete model, and the dichotomy of morals in society more broadly, Klinger in this instance – like Munch – seems to have aimed for an intense psychological impact. Usually, both artists created images that retain mystery while offering a broad platform for individual interpretation. Some of Klinger's works, though, such as his famous series *Paraphrase über den Fund eines Handschuhs* (1881), are so remarkably dreamlike and poetic, they seem to offer a textbook formula of literal Symbolism, almost overegging the Freudian cake. Equally, in plate 1 of the abovementioned series *Ein Leben* (**Fig. 17**), the viewer is presented with a woman, not any woman, but Eve, who is – literally – depicted pulling chestnuts out of the fire, thus risking injury in order to nourish or please her male companion Adam, in a beautifully rendered yet bluntly visual representation of an expression that exists in German and English alike.

On occasion, visual parallels between Klinger's and Munch's works are obvious, but the titles indicate a different context. In *Puberty* (**Fig. 18**; and see also **Fig. 104**), an image created in many variations in both print and paint, Munch shows a young girl exposed, full of angst and anxieties. Munch seems to be referring to Klinger's composition in *Erwachen* ('Awakening'),⁵⁶ plate 8 of his *Eine Liebe, Opus X* ('A Love, Opus X') series (1887), in which the young heroine is sitting on a bed, expelled from society and apparently pregnant (as implied by the apparition of the embryo), but nevertheless dignified and self-contained (**Fig. 19**). In Munch's work, first executed as a painting in 1886, then as a lithograph in 1894 and later as an etching in 1902, the young woman is shown nude, her vacant gaze fixed on the viewer.³⁷

In images like these we can detect that the connection between Klinger and Munch was based on more than shared

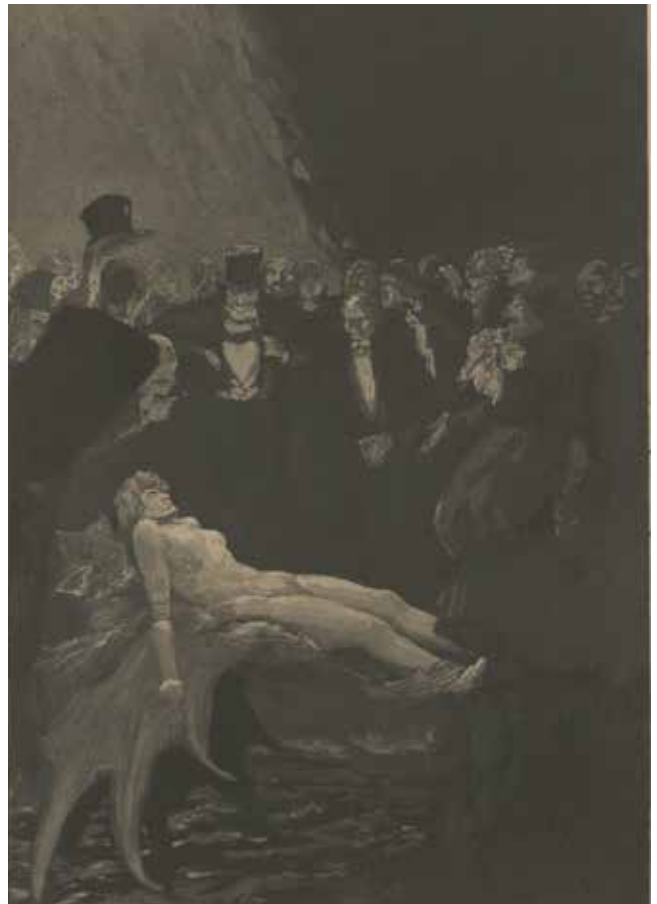


Figure 16 Max Klinger, *Gefesselt* ('Tied Up'), etching and aquatint, 597mm x 442mm, from *Ein Leben* ('A Life'), 1884. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung, A 484

Figure 17 *Prefacio II* ('Preface II'), etching with engraving and aquatint, 597mm x 439mm, from *Ein Leben* ('A Life'), 1884. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung, A 476

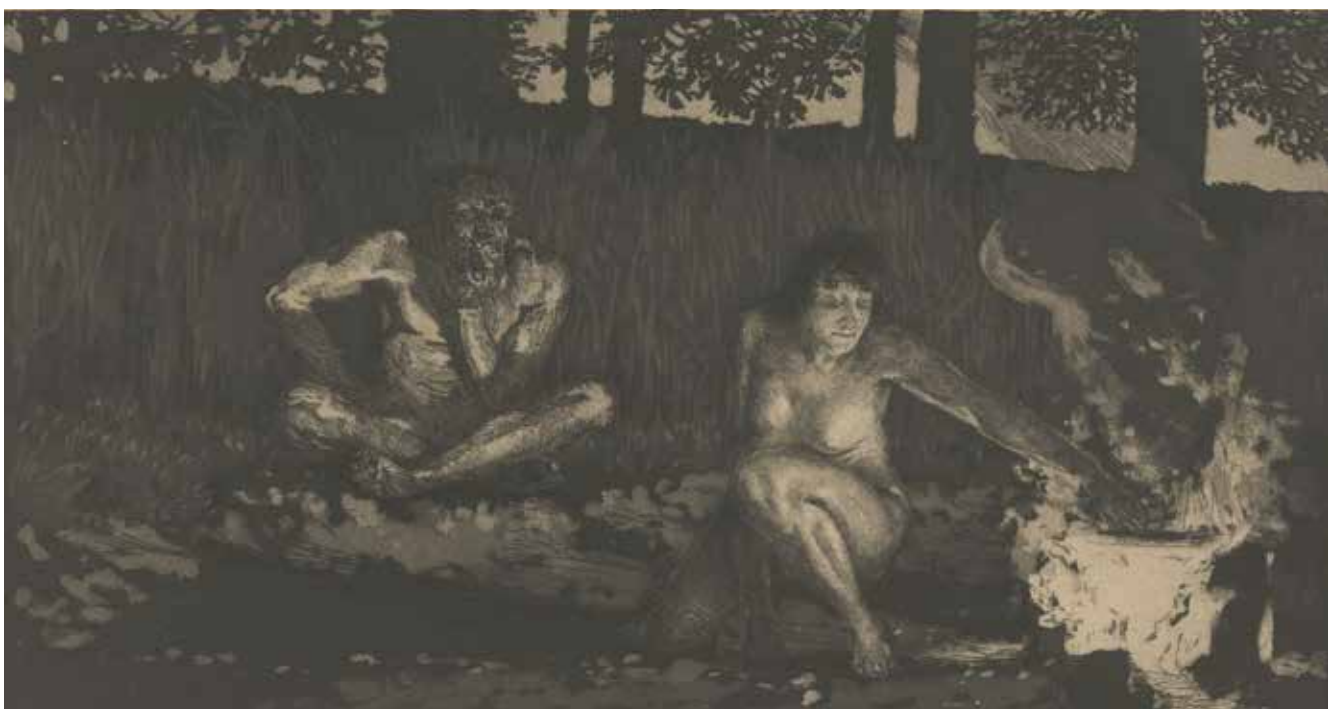




Figure 18 Edvard Munch, *Puberty*, 1902, etching, 188mm x 150mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00074-02. Photo by Ove Kvavik



Figure 19 Max Klinger, *Erwachen* ('Awakening'), etching and engraving, 455mm x 315mm, from *Eine Liebe*, 1887. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Kunstsammlung, A 497

tastes in drink and aesthetic ideals. It extended to a critical psychological analysis and debate about the role of individuals – and in this case specifically women – in society, and the exciting but often challenging personal relationships that lie at the heart of their, and also Carrière's, artistic outputs.

Notes

- 1 See especially Hansen and Schneede 1994; and Giulia Bartrum's essay on Munch's responses to many contemporary printmakers in Bartrum 2019, 58–95.
- 2 Akademie der Künste, Berlin, PrAdK Pers. BK 365.
- 3 Robert James Bantens compiled a list of painters to whom 'Carrière should be compared' and dryly states that 'Munch should be mentioned'. See Bantens 1983, 132. Werner Timm also points out similarities in passing. See Timm, W. 1969. *Edvard Munch, Graphik*, Berlin, 28. In 2006 a retrospective of Carrière's works at the Kunsthalle, Bremen, presented lithographs by Carrière alongside prints by Munch. In the catalogue the curator, Anne Röver-Kann, briefly points to these visual similarities while adding that they 'cannot be done justice on this occasion'. See Röver-Kann 2006, 132. 'Es erweist sich, dass dieses sehr komplexe Verhältnis zwischen Carrière und Munch, das sich besonders deutlich in den Schwarzweiß-Lithografien zeigt, eine genauere Darstellung erfordert, als wir sie in diesem Rahmen liefern können.' [It is evident that the very complex relationship between Carrière and Munch, which is particularly striking in the black-and-white lithographs, demands a more in-depth examination than can be provided within this framework.]
- 4 See Meffre 2006.
- 5 'Eugène Carrière exprime ce que je sens, il montre l'objet même (...) des Réalités ayant la magie du Rêve!' [Eugène Carrière expresses what I feel, he shows the very object (...) the Realities having the magic of the Dream!] See Dolent 1888, 240.
- 6 Degas infamously called Carrière 'un homme mal élevé qui fume sa pipe dans la chambre de l'enfant malade' [an ill-mannered man who smokes his pipe in the sick child's room]. See: Loyrette 1991, 594. Whistler is quoted as stating in front of Carrière's *Maternité* at the Musée du Luxembourg: 'ich finde es unanständig, in einem Kinderzimmer so zu rauchen' [I find it inappropriate to smoke like that in a nursery]. See Scheffler 1943, 58.
- 7 Rapetti *et al.* 2008, 93, cat. 153.
- 8 Woll 2012, 42, cat. 7.
- 9 Bartrum 2019, 44.
- 10 Schneede 1984, 19. For a draft letter from Munch to Thiis, see https://emunch.no/HYBRIDNo-MM_Noo37.xhtml#ENo-MM_Noo37-00-01r (accessed 24 April 2022).
- 11 For more information on Carrière's technique, see Schultz 2012, 14–21.
- 12 Delteil 1969, cats 37, 31 and 32, 26, 25, 27, 33 and 39. For a discussion of Carrière's portrait of Rochefort in relation to contemporary photography, see Schultz 2006, 136–43.
- 13 Musée Fabre, Montpellier, D33.3.1. See Rapetti *et al.* 2008, 304, cat. 1018.
- 14 Uncatalogued correspondence can be found in the archives of the Musée Eugene Carrière at Gournay sur Marne.
- 15 See <https://emunch.no/person.xhtml?id=pe1224> (accessed 17 November 2021) for references to Lemercier's zinc lithograph portrait of a woman in 1897, and for dealings between Munch's lover, Tulla Larsen, and Lemercier in the early 1900s.

- 16 Woll 2012, 94–5, cat. 66.
- 17 Ibid., 114, cat. 84.
- 18 Ibid., 131, cat. 99.
- 19 For a comprehensive summary of Munch's effect on German printmakers, and an interesting comparison between Munch's portrait of Mallarmé and Félix Vallotton's portraits (particularly that of Fyodor Dostoevsky), see Black and Bruteig 2009, 46, 60.
- 20 Woll 2012, 62–3, cat. 37; Woll 2013, 103.
- 21 Woll 2012, 77, cat. 46.
- 22 Ibid., 52, cat. 19.
- 23 Delteil 1969, 36.
- 24 Woll 2012, cat. 11 (drypoint) and cat. 39 (lithograph).
- 25 Delteil 1969, cat. 12.
- 26 Ibid., , cat. 43.
- 27 Ibid., cats 34, 35.
- 28 In this respect, Carrière was in good company. Gauguin and Rodin clearly formed part of Munch's orbit in spite of the lack of evidence of direct contact; regardless of whether either artist met Munch, visual echoes are detectable in both their works and Munch's, and it is therefore unsurprising that art historians have overlooked the existing documentary lacunae to hypothesise about Munch's relationships with his contemporaries. Munch's influence on later followers has been examined more thoroughly, most recently in the case of Jasper Johns. See Ravenal 2016.
- 29 I am grateful to Silvie Le Gratiot for her help and support in the Carrière archive at the Musée Eugène Carrière, Gournay-sur-Marne.
- 30 Giulia Bartrum also points to the 'Durand-Ruel Gallery, which from 1889–97 put on regular displays of prints by members of the recently founded Société de l'Estampe Originale', which would have been frequented by Carrière. See Bartrum 2019, 78.
- 31 Carrière and Gauguin swapped painted self-portraits on this occasion. The self-portrait Carrière received is now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.
- 32 Coppel 2019, 107.
- 33 *Mystical Shore*, 1897, colour woodcut; see Woll 2012, cat. 117.
- 34 Delteil 1969, cat. 38.
- 35 Munch's engagement with the Berlin art scene lasted well beyond the period on which I focus in this essay. While his appointment to the Berlin Akademie der Künste marked official recognition, his design for Max Reinhardt's theatre, a set for Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881), exemplifies how his art infiltrated different branches of the Berlin cultural scene. See Lampe and Chéroux 2012, 108–18; and Coppel 2019, 125–6. For the large number of German collectors of Munch's prints, see Carey 2019, 134–49.
- 36 From June to September 2020 the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, presented a small exhibition titled *Liebe am Abgrund. Edvard Munch, Max Klinger und das Drama der Geschlechter*. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Cw3MpfknGo> (accessed 25 November 2020).
- 37 Klinger 2005, 9–11.
- 38 For example, the Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst in Vienna, which published *Die Grafischen Künste*, a magazine with high-quality original prints. See <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/gk> (accessed 17 November 2021).
- 39 Torjusen 1978, 192.
- 40 Bartrum 2019, 74. It is likely that Munch met Klinger either in Berlin or in Leipzig. In Thuringia Munch also lived very close to Klinger. See n. 21.
- 41 Singer 1909, cats 16–23, 43–51.
- 42 Bartrum 2019, 75; Birnie Danzker and Scheffler 1996, 17. The painting is now in the Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig.
- 43 Bartrum 2019, 84.
- 44 Ker-Xavier Roussel, Albert Besnard and Odilon Redon are just three examples.
- 45 See Parshall 2009.
- 46 Birnie Danzker and Scheffler 1996, 16–17.
- 47 Today the finished sculpture executed in marble is in Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig; see Matelowski 2017, 53.
- 48 Singer 1909, cats 127–46.
- 49 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Alte National Galerie, inv. NG 9/85.
- 50 Woll 2012, 137, cat. 112.
- 51 Ibid., 295, cat. 419; 176–7, cat. 157.
- 52 Ibid., cat. 419.
- 53 Ibid., 182, cat. 167.
- 54 Singer 1909, cat. 137.
- 55 Schmid 1899, 72.
- 56 Singer 1909, cat. 164.
- 57 See Bartrum 2019, 82–4.

Chapter 2

Edvard Munch and the Artists of *La Revue Blanche*: Promoting Prints in Late 19th-century French Avant-garde Journals

Jennifer Ramkalawon

In 1935 Edvard Munch, reflecting on his prints, scribbled a few random notes in a sketchbook. Under the title ‘Grafik’, he listed prints made in the mid-1890s, such as *Self Portrait* and *Vampire*. He bemoaned the fact that these works had not been appreciated at the time and that he was indifferent to them, giving them away or selling them cheaply a few decades earlier.¹

However pessimistic Munch’s musings appear to be in hindsight, even he could not deny that on his arrival in Paris in 1896 the prospects for his future printmaking endeavours were decidedly optimistic. Munch was now living in a city that in the last 10 years of the 19th century was experiencing a spectacular boom in print production and was to inspire his most creative period of printmaking as he experimented with colour lithography and began to make his first woodcuts. Printmaking for Munch, as with many artists, was primarily a way to make money and to promote one’s name to a wider audience.

The aim of this essay is not to document Munch’s printmaking activity in Paris, which has been extensively covered elsewhere,² but to examine closely the role played by mainly French journals, concentrating on *La Revue Blanche*, in publishing and promoting artists’ prints and how this affected Munch during his stay in Paris. This essay will demonstrate how some of them played a key part in alerting a curious French audience to Munch’s work and how he fitted into the vogue for all things Scandinavian that was sweeping through Paris at the time.

These journals performed a crucial function in the commercial dissemination of artists’ prints, revealing first-hand information about the intricacies of the late 19th-century French print market. The offices of these journals also provided exhibiting and selling spaces for artists, a subject that deserves more research. Prints were sold mainly as single sheets or in portfolios and much material can be gleaned about them from the frequent advertisements that appeared in these publications. For example, Munch’s first portfolio of prints is listed in the German periodical *PAN* for a considerably higher sum than the few kroner that he mentions in his sketchbook notes. These lists provide much important information on contemporary prints, such as their original titles, medium and edition numbers. Some prints were published under the aegis of particular journals, like *La Revue Blanche*, appearing *hors-texte*, that is, within the journal, not as an illustration integrated with the text, but as a work of art that could be extracted from the magazine to be framed, stored in a portfolio or pasted into an album. By examining such primary sources, this essay will demonstrate how these publications enabled graphic works (including posters and print albums) to find a diverse audience through extensive advertising, bringing them not only to the notice of collectors enticed by expensive etchings or lithographs on special papers with exclusive print runs or in deluxe volumes, but also to the general public with prints on cheaper paper, but at an affordable price.

The proliferation of illustrated journals and periodicals circulating at the time ensured that prints began to reach a much wider audience. In 1900 the poet, writer and former employee of the Bibliothèque nationale, Remy de Gourmont, produced a useful pamphlet listing no fewer

than 130 titles of these *petites revues* in print.³ In his introduction he states that between 1890 and 1898 at least 100 new reviews were published that ‘more or less’ imitated recently established journals such as *La Revue Blanche*, *Mercure de France*, *L’Hermitage* and *La Plume*.⁴ However, some were very short-lived enterprises, disappearing suddenly due to lack of funds. Munch would have been familiar with many of these publications, probably during previous stays in France. Indeed, in Kristiania (Oslo), his bohemian friends Hans Jæger and Christian Krohg were responsible for the magazine *Impressionisten*, which was loosely based on titles like *La Revue Blanche*, where they listed their famous ‘Nine Bohemian Commandments’.⁵

Although these journals were known for mainly specialising in art, poetry or politics, many of them, including *La Revue Blanche*, covered a multitude of issues ranging from the political to the literary as will be explored later. Such diverse subject matter catered to a large, but mostly intellectual audience.⁶ *La Revue Blanche* at its height had a readership of around 10,000, due in part to its clever marketing ploy of using posters designed by Munch’s French contemporaries, Pierre Bonnard and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.⁷

M’arrêtant, je m’appuyai à la balustrade, presque mort de fatigue. Au-dessus du fjord bleu noir pendaient des nuages, rouges comme du sang et comme des langues de fer. Mes amis s’éloignaient, et, seul, tremblant d’angoisse, je pris conscience du grand cri infini de la nature. – E.M.

Pausing, I leaned against the railing, tired to death from exhaustion. Above the blue-black fjord clouds hovered, blood red like flaming tongues. My friends walked on, and alone, quivering with angst, I sensed a great infinite scream in nature.

On 1 December 1895, Munch’s powerful prose poem translated from German into French was published in the Parisian avant-garde journal *La Revue Blanche* (**Fig. 20**). The text was placed below a reproduction of Munch’s lithograph *The Scream* (1895). This was the first time a work by Munch had appeared in the French press.⁸ A note prefacing Munch’s text explained that the reason for its inclusion in the magazine was in response to two articles in the previous issue that had piqued readers’ interest. The first article, entitled ‘Correspondance de Kristiania’, was written by Karl Vilhelm Hammer on the Norwegian playwright Gunnar Heiberg.⁹ Munch knew both Hammer and Heiberg, the latter Munch would later grow to dislike. Heiberg had introduced the artist to the bohemian crowd who congregated at the inn known as the Black Piglet when he was living in Berlin in 1893. The second article was a detailed review of Munch’s 1895 exhibition at the Blomqvist Gallery in Kristiania by the editor of *La Revue Blanche*, Thadée Natanson.¹⁰ The year before, Natanson had visited Norway with his wife Misia Godebska on a belated honeymoon. Their friend, the actor and theatre director Aurélien Lugné-Poe, was on a theatrical tour of Scandinavia and introduced them to the great Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen in Kristiania.¹¹ While on tour, Lugné-Poe had met Munch in Sweden through Ibsen’s French translator, Count Prozor. In October 1895 Natanson saw Munch’s exhibition at the Blomqvist Gallery, comprising 40 paintings and a similar number of prints

and drawings that had not been exhibited before in Kristiania.¹²

Natanson reported to his readers that although the public flocked to the show, it was merely to mock the artist. Munch recalled, ‘It was 1895, I had an exhibition at Blomqvist in the autumn – There was a heated controversy about the pictures – there were calls to boycott the venue – the police [were summoned]’.¹³ There was even a public debate calling into question Munch’s sanity.¹⁴ The show provided much mirth for the caricaturists of Kristiania’s satirical journals such as *Tyrihans* (**Fig. 21**), deriding in particular his paintings: *The Scream* (1893), *Vampire* (1894), *Madonna* (1894–5) and *Jealousy* (1895).

In France references to Munch had previously appeared in a few paragraphs (with no accompanying images) in the journal *Mercure de France*, *La Revue Blanche*’s rival publication. In January 1893 the journalist Henri Albert wrote about the ‘*peintre impressionniste norvégien Edouard [sic] Munch*’ and his notorious exhibition in Berlin that had ‘*exaspéra pendant quelques jours le publique de Berlin*’. Albert was referring to Munch’s exhibition at the Verein Berliner Künstler, which closed after one week in November 1892.¹⁵ He also pointed out Munch’s symphonies of colours, comparing his work to poetry.

However, it was Natanson’s review that was the first to discuss individual works by Munch at length. Without being explicit, he makes a direct correlation between Munch’s preoccupation with love and death alongside feelings of anguish and terror (*‘des nuances de terreur, d’angoisse’*), linking him naturally with the Symbolist movement and not the Impressionists as Albert had done, as Munch’s style had changed dramatically since the Berlin show.

Natanson’s insightful and detailed article analyses Munch’s paintings, drawing attention to his use of colour, which reflects the disturbing emotions depicted. He describes *Vampire* as swathed in red (*‘auréolée de rouge’*), referring to the red hair of the woman bearing down on the man’s neck. In the work *Jealousy*, the corresponding emotion is expressed by a triangular face yellow with anguish (*‘d’un que jaunît l’angoisse’*). Natanson picks out a dishevelled woman in a forest with a man crouching in a corner like a wounded animal (*‘omne animal trieste’*), both of whom appear in the painting *Ashes* (1895). He also notices disturbing details such as a foetus and sperm decorating the frames: *‘dans des cadres qu’ornent des foetus ou se contournent les lineaments des spermatozoides’*. The painting *Madonna* (1894–5) originally had a frame decorated with carved spermatozoa and embryos, which is now lost. Munch incorporated similar imagery in the borders of the lithograph of the same subject. Natanson senses the uncomfortable posture of the entangled lovers describing their arched bodies in *Kiss by the Window* (1892); he sees faces contorted with distress in *Death in the Sickroom* (1893); and comments on the *‘promeneurs hagards’* – a reference to the zombie-like figures in *Evening on Karl Johan Street* (1892). The Frenchman declared that the artist had spent too long in Germany and was already famous there, particularly in Munich and Berlin, and urged him to come to Paris. There was no doubt in Natanson’s mind of the expressive power and feeling in Munch’s work.

In fact, Munch had been thinking of leaving Berlin as most of his bohemian friends had left the city, including

M. Edvard Munch. Le texte qui la commente est un de ces petits poèmes que M. Munch a l'habitude de joindre à ses compositions. Il constitue donc un document à l'appui de ce que nous disions des préoccupations littéraires du peintre norvégien.



M'arrêtant, je m'appuyai à la balustrade, presque mort de fatigue. Au-dessus du fjord bleu noir pendaient des nuages, rouges comme du sang et comme des langues de feu. Mes amis s'éloignaient, et, seul, tremblant d'angoisse, je pris conscience du grand cri infini de la nature. — E. M.

Le Gérant : LÉON FRÉMONT.

Arles-sur-Aube. — Imprimerie Léon FRÉMONT, place du Marché-Couvert.

Figure 20 Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1895, reproduction of a lithograph in *La Revue Blanche* 9(60), 1 December 1895, 75mm x 55mm (image size). British Museum, 2018,7086.1.21. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan



Figure 21 Caricatures by Olaf Krohn of works shown at Munch's Blomqvist Gallery exhibition, reproduced in *Tyrihans*, Bind VI, No. 42, 18 October 1895, pp. 580–1. National Library, Oslo

August Strindberg, who had been living in Paris since 1894. A few months before his Blomqvist show, Munch had written to Count Prozor asking him for advice: 'It has long been my wish to be able to exhibit in Paris ... Dare I ask you for advice on how to proceed.'¹⁶

Arriving in Paris in February 1896, Munch had already been in touch with his great friend Julius Meier-Graefe, who was working for Siegfried (Samuel) Bing's gallery, Maison de L'Art Nouveau. He had encouraged Munch in December 1895 to come to Paris and implored him to send him more pictures, like *The Scream* or similar: 'strong stuff!' ('*Schick mir etwas, zum Beispiel das Geschrei oder dergleichen. Starke Sachen!*'), no doubt wanting to capitalise on the reproduction of the image in *La Revue Blanche*.¹⁷ Meier-Graefe had published Munch's first portfolio of eight drypoint prints in 1895 and it was sold through the German artistic literary journal *PAN* for which he was an editor. The journal had offices in Paris, and Munch's portfolio of early prints could be bought there for around 62 francs.¹⁸ Its Paris editor was Henri Albert, mentioned above, who had possibly been introduced to Munch's work through his association with the magazine. *PAN* was a revolutionary journal that lasted for five years from 1895 to 1900. It was a mixture of literary texts and illustrations (mostly photomechanically reproduced) and some original prints. From its bureau in Paris one could purchase not only Munch's etchings, but also prints by Arnold Böcklin, Max Klinger and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.¹⁹ *PAN* also commissioned Munch to produce a portrait print of his friend and fellow Norwegian, the writer Knut Hamsun. It appeared in September 1896 as a heliograph (i.e. a reproduction), but an impression of the original etching was also inserted as a supplement in the September issue.²⁰

La Revue Blanche was a much more audacious and cosmopolitan journal, lasting considerably longer than *PAN*, running from 1889 to 1903. It is no surprise that it was the first to publish the shocking image of *The Scream* by such a radical artist as Munch. When the first edition appeared on 1 December 1889, it declared that its pages would 'palpitate with life': open to all, all opinions, all schools.²¹ Founded by four friends on holiday in Liège, Auguste Jeunhomme, Joë Hogge and brothers Paul and Charles Leclercq, *La Revue Blanche* was first edited at Paul Leclercq's apartment on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. However, it was a friend of Hogge's, Louis-Alfred Natanson, son of a wealthy banker, with his brothers Thadée and Alexandre, who became the magazine's financial backers and its driving force. They were instrumental in moving its offices to Paris in 1891.²² From December 1889 to August 1891, *La Revue Blanche* was printed in Belgium and although its editorial offices were in Paris, for its first three years it had a distinctly Franco-Belgian flavour, for instance giving equal space to exhibition reviews from Paris and Brussels. Once printing had transferred to Paris and the offices moved to 19 rue des Martyrs, it reinvented itself with a completely new design.²³ The magazine had a modern feel with its stark white cover and simple black typeface that distinguished it from its competitors whose covers seemed to fix them firmly in the 19th century (Fig. 22). For example, *Mercure de France* had a purple cover adorned with the figure of Mercury and *La Plume*'s covers usually featured a highly decorative scene.



Figure 22 Cover of *La Revue Blanche*, Nouvelle série, no. 1, October 1891, 225mm x 145mm. British Museum, presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan

A few years before it published the image of *The Scream*, *La Revue Blanche* was an important vehicle for the introduction of Scandinavian literature to France, publishing work by many of Munch's friends and contemporaries. 'Sensitiva Amorosa' by Ola Hansson, a Swedish poet whom Munch had known in Berlin, and Knut Hamsun's 'Sur les bancs de Terre-Neuve' both appeared, in 1892 and 1893 respectively.²⁴ This was part of a wave of interest in Scandinavian culture that captured the imagination of the Parisian public. Through dramatic productions such as those at André Antoine's Théâtre-Libre, audiences saw the first performances of Scandinavian plays in Paris by Ibsen, Strindberg and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Later, Lugné-Poe took up the mantle at his Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, which he founded in 1893. Along with reviews of these plays, Henri Albert wrote on Strindberg and Hamsun; Ibsen's 'moral ideas' were discussed by Henry Bordeaux, and an extract of the second part of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's *Beyond Human Power* appeared in 1896.²⁵

Literature was taken seriously and this was demonstrated by the range of writers whose work appeared within the pages of *La Revue Blanche*: from Russians such as Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Anton Chekhov to emerging young French writers like Marcel Proust, Alfred Jarry, Guillaume Apollinaire and André Gide, who became its literary editor

in 1895. Jarry, Apollinaire and the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti were introduced to the journal by the remarkable Félix Fénéon. Appointed by Thadée Natanson, Fénéon took up the post of editorial secretary in January 1895, replacing Lucien Muhlfeld, and was promoted to editor-in-chief two years later.²⁶ He was the driving force behind the most extraordinary political issue published in March 1897, which revisited the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 with eyewitness accounts and interviews.²⁷ The young writers of *La Revue Blanche* were mostly in their twenties and passionate about the causes they championed within the pages of the magazine, particularly during the Dreyfus affair in which they were without question ardent Dreyfusards.²⁸

Politics aside, the magazine explored and dissected a multitude of subjects, for instance, sport was covered with columns written by France's future prime minister, Léon Blum. Henri Gauthier-Villars wrote about Richard Wagner and homosexuality. An early draft of Paul Gauguin's *Noa Noa* (without illustrations), produced in collaboration with the Symbolist poet Charles Morice, appeared in 1897. Oscar Wilde was celebrated within its pages along with poems by his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas.²⁹ It was eclectic and therein lay its charm. Readers were offered articles on diverse topics such as the works of William Morris, Arthur Schopenhauer and Hokusai, along with articles on occultism and cycling. Even Jane Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey* (known in France as *Catherine Morland*) was serialised in 1898, translated by Fénéon and published a year later by the review's own imprint, Editions de la Revue Blanche. Fénéon's friend Charles Henry, inventor and librarian at the Sorbonne, wrote articles on science and was also a specialist in the history of mathematics.³⁰

Along with its unfailing support of youthful literary talent, another of the major achievements of the magazine was its encouragement of emerging or unknown artists. This was mainly through the efforts of Thadée Natanson. Reflecting on the journal in 1948, Paul Leclercq recalled that it was down to Thadée's intuition and influence that *La Revue Blanche* became famous.³¹ Heavily built, with a brilliant black beard resembling an Assyrian priest, Thadée would champion the work of a generation of fledgling artists by publishing their prints in the magazine. Not only was he the editor of *La Revue Blanche*, but he was also the journal's art critic until c. 1899 when Georges Faillet, a Symbolist poet and anarchist, took over writing the reviews under the name 'Félicien Fagus'.³² He continued the tradition of heralding new talent when in 1901 he wrote one of the first reviews on the work of an unknown Spanish artist called Pablo Picasso.³³

Before discussing the series of original prints by artists published in *La Revue Blanche*, it is worth putting them into context by looking at other journals that promoted such works. As early as 1859, the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* began to incorporate prints within its pages as described at the end of each issue. One issue cost 2 francs and contained between 10 and 12 prints. It offered its subscribers the entire annual run of 24 issues in four volumes for 40 francs, with a few examples printed on Holland paper containing etchings (proofs before letters, published on China paper, coloured in

certain cases) for 100 francs. All transactions were dealt with via post to the journal's offices. In the 1870s *Paris à l'eau-forte* started to publish original artists' prints.³⁴ In 1874 readers could purchase for 3 francs eight prints by Frédéric Régamy (who was also one of the editors), obtainable from the journal's offices.³⁵ Almost a decade later *La Vie Artistique* introduced a novel way to entice its subscribers to collect prints. In 1882, in addition to a print included *hors-texte* with each issue, it also offered extra prints provided the reader subscribed to other journals.³⁶ *La Vie Artistique* specialised in offering drypoints, and for its short run mostly published the work of Henri Boutet and Marcellin Desboutin. At this point, the collector was already being steered towards the exclusivity of the print in the form of unlettered proofs and signed and numbered impressions.³⁷

A much more ambitious journal than *La Vie Artistique* was *La Revue indépendante*. Run by the writer Édouard Dujardin, it could be seen as a precursor to *La Revue Blanche*; indeed, Fénéon was one of the founders and the editor until 1889. From 1887 to 1888 it published as frontispieces prints by various artists, including Albert Besnard, Odilon Redon, Paul Signac and Camille Pissarro (**Figs 23–4**).³⁸ These prints were also available in deluxe volumes of the journal that founder-patrons could buy annually for 100 francs. The prints only appeared in these volumes and were not sold separately. On 3 November 1887 *La Revue indépendante* opened a library and shop on its premises, the latter described as a '*magasin de tableaux spécialité de livres et de tableaux modernes ouvrages rares et curieux*'. The following year it held monthly exhibitions in its offices, including one in March of works by Édouard Manet, the majority of which had never been exhibited.

The last 10 years of the 19th century saw enormous strides in print production. In the 1890s colour lithography became the most exciting form of printmaking. For example, vast new steam presses were able to cope with the huge stones required for poster production. Publications such as *La Plume*, *L'Image* and *La Critique* actively promoted posters and prints within their pages. They reproduced a mixture of photomechanical illustrations, and original prints were available for purchase from their respective offices. Extensive lists of prints with prices usually appeared at the back of each publication.³⁹ *La Plume* also published two catalogues in 1899 and 1900, each containing illustrations of over 300 posters for sale with prices ranging from 5 to 20 francs. In 1896 *Les Maîtres de l'Affiche* began to publish reduced posters by French and foreign artists with the original size of each poster listed. One issue containing four 'posters' cost 2½ francs, and 100 deluxe issues were available on Japan paper with subscribers paying 80 francs for 12 issues. The journal *L'Estante et l'Affiche* zealously promoted both prints and posters, as its editor André Mellerio strongly advocated the right of the print to be taken seriously as an original work of art.⁴⁰ It also published copious lists of 'prints of the month', with descriptions of different impressions and prices, sometimes publishing *catalogues raisonnés* of artists' prints.

Print albums, many published by journals, were mostly aimed at the specialist print collector and were also vehicles for the promotion of prints. For example, *Les Peintres-Lithographes* was a portfolio of 10 lithographs by various



Figure 23 Cover of *La Revue indépendante*, III(6), April 1887, 176mm x 143mm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rare, RES 8-NFZ-5

artists, published under the auspices of the journal *L'Artiste*. It could be purchased in 1892 on China paper in an edition of 100 at 60 francs for subscribers (non-subscribers paid 80 francs), or each print could be bought separately for 15 francs.⁴¹ Alternatively, a special edition of 20 proofs with remarques was offered on Japan paper, signed and numbered by the artists at 150 francs for subscribers.

Although prints were a way for an artist to introduce their work to a wider audience, they were also a viable commercial prospect, as demonstrated by the bewildering array of choices of prints and the different pricing structure. As the price systems indicate, prints had their own tight exclusive market, and some journals catered for the rarefied world of the print collector, publishing long lists of prints with a range of prices according to which paper they were printed on, or whether they were signed and numbered, the smaller the edition the better, though this would invariably be the most expensive. One of the most luxurious albums that appeared at this time was *L'Épreuve*. Aimed exclusively at the high-end market, it was strictly limited to an edition of 215, with its plates destroyed after the edition had been printed, thereby ensuring its rarity after publication. From 1894 to 1895 10 prints were published every month in various media, printed on different papers.⁴² It was a tour de force of printmaking; the edition of 200 (*édition ordinaire*) cost 125 francs to subscribers, with 15 deluxe editions offered to subscribers at 250 francs.



Figure 24 Odilon Redon, *Cime noir* ('Black Peak'), lithograph, frontispiece published in *La Revue indépendante*, III(6), April 1887, 176mm x 143mm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rare, RES 8-NFZ-5

While *L'Épreuve* had the feel of a luxury product, *La Revue Blanche* could not have been more different. To begin with it was priced at 60 centimes, rising later to 1 franc, and as with other periodicals, prices were offered to subscribers for the annual *édition de luxe* on Holland paper for 20 francs, and the *édition ordinaire* for 10 francs.⁴³ It was small enough to be read on the move and fitted easily into a pocket; it was not made to be pored over by a collector in a library. It was full of new ideas to be discussed in cafés and while strolling along boulevards. It was modern and Thadée Natanson reflected this in the artists that he featured in the journal. Rather than reproducing work by a random selection of artists, he commissioned contemporary painters that he knew and admired. In one of his earliest reviews, he enthused about a mixed show at the art gallery of Le Barc de Boutteville, which included work by relatively unknown artists at the time, such as Maurice Denis, Édouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard.⁴⁴

These artists had all either met at the prestigious Lycée Condorcet or later at the Académie Julian and formed the core members of the group known as 'Les Nabis'.⁴⁵ Founded in 1890 by Denis, they took the name 'nabi', from the Hebrew/Arabic word for prophet, casting the role of the artist as 'seer'. Natanson rhapsodised about the charm of their work while also highlighting the prints of Félix Vallotton, noting his '*charmantes gravures ironiques*'. The Swiss-born Vallotton was considered '*le Nabi étranger*' or foreign



Figure 25 Ker-Xavier Roussel, invitation to the exhibition of Ker Xavier Roussel at *La Revue Blanche*, Paris, 5–20 April 1894, lithograph, 140mm x 189mm. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), object number p1442v2000

Figure 26 Pierre Bonnard, *Femme au parapluie* ('Woman with an Umbrella'), lithograph, frontispiece to *La Revue Blanche* 7(35), September 1894, 250mm x 160mm. British Museum, 2018,7086.1.14. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan



Nabi, having met the others while attending the Académie Julian. The Nabi artists would become part of *La Revue Blanche*'s extended family, spending weekends with Thadée and Misia at their summer houses, 'La Grangette' from 1894 and later 'Le Relais' at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne.

In the issue dated 25 May 1893, an announcement appeared in *La Revue Blanche* stating that from 1 July the magazine would be illustrating original unpublished prints. Seventeen prints were published as frontispieces to the journal from July 1893 to December 1894 and later a selection would be published in an album. They were all lithographs except Vallotton's contribution, which was a woodcut. Several artists, such as Vuillard, Denis, Bonnard, Ker-Xavier Roussel and Paul Ranson, contributed two prints.⁴⁶ Vuillard was the first artist whose work appeared as a frontispiece, in the July–August edition in 1893, and another print by him appeared in January the following year. In subsequent issues signed and numbered impressions were advertised for sale for 5 francs each. Two years earlier, Thadée had invited Vuillard to exhibit his paintings at the journal's small offices in the rue des Martyrs. The artist later provided a frontispiece to *Nouvelles passionnées* by Maurice Beaubourg, published by *La Revue Blanche* in 1893, and this lithograph of a standing female figure may well have been the inspiration to publish prints in the magazine itself.

Prior to July 1893 when the first frontispiece appeared, there had been no illustrations in the magazine. Roussel's image of two women chatting on a terrace was the second print published.⁴⁷ By contrast, his next print was the biblical subject *Noli me tangere*, which appeared in April the following year, coinciding with an exhibition of his work at the journal's offices advertised with an invitation by the artist (Fig. 25).⁴⁸ Denis also chose religious subjects to illustrate both of his contributions to the magazine and used modified images from existing paintings to make his prints.⁴⁹ Bonnard and Toulouse-Lautrec were two artists held in high esteem by Thadée. In addition to requesting prints from them for



Figure 27 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Carnaval* ('Carnival'), lithograph, frontispiece to *La Revue Blanche* 6(29), March 1894, 250mm x 165mm. British Museum, 2018,7086.1.8. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan

his magazine, he also commissioned them to make posters advertising *La Revue Blanche*.⁵⁰ Bonnard's second frontispiece, which appeared in 1894, shows a typical coquettish Parisienne, gingerly holding up her skirt while clutching an umbrella (**Fig. 26**). He later provided the illustrations to the book *Marie* by the Danish writer Peter Nanson, serialised in the journal and published by its imprint in 1898. In Thadée Natanson's reminiscences, *Peints à leur tour*, he recalled Toulouse-Lautrec's great pleasure when a second lithographic stone was required solely to provide the red for the lips of the actress in his frontispiece, *Carnaval* (**Fig. 27**).⁵¹

Paul Ranson and the Hungarian artist József Rippl-Rónai both contributed prints of reading women. The latter, in his first ever lithograph, depicted his future wife Lazarin Baidrion with her head down reading by the light of a lamp.⁵² He prepared a hand-coloured impression (**Fig. 28**) as his contribution, inscribing it in pencil '*pour la Revue Blanche*'.

Henri-Gabriel Ibels and Paul Sérusier both provided images of sturdy peasant women. Ibels's print recalls the solid working-class figures he illustrated in *L'Escarmouche*, the short-lived periodical that also contained illustrations by Toulouse-Lautrec and Vallotton (**Figs 29–30**). Sérusier and Charles Cottet both spent time at Pont-Aven and were deeply inspired by the local peasant life they encountered in



Figure 28 József Rippl-Rónai, *Woman Reading by Lamplight*, 1894, hand-coloured lithograph, 193mm x 147mm. Szépművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. no. 1900-28. Study for *Femme et lampe* ('Woman and Lamp'), for *La Revue Blanche* 7(34), August 1894. Photo © 2022 Szépművészeti Múzeum

Brittany, submitting prints of Breton subjects for their frontispieces. Sérusier's print of an elderly market vendor, selling what look like sweets in jars, is known under two different titles: *La marchande de bonbons* (The Sweet Seller) or *La marchande ambulante* (The Street Vendor). Strangely, the prints appeared in *La Revue Blanche* without titles.⁵³ Cottet's print of a group of Breton girls is after a detailed charcoal drawing of the same subject, *Six bretonnes devant un pont* (Six Breton Women in Front of a Bridge) (**Figs 31–2**). He is most likely to have given this drawing to the printer Edward Ancourt as the outlines appear to have been traced from the drawing to make the print.⁵⁴ Odilon Redon was the only artist that Thadée chose who was of a different generation from the Nabi artists. However, he was held in great esteem by many of them and the feeling was mutual, as Redon would later make lithographic portraits of several of the Nabis, such as Vuillard, Bonnard, Sérusier and Denis, between 1900 and 1903.⁵⁵ In a celebratory piece on Redon's retrospective at the Galerie Durand Ruel, Thadée called him the 'Prince of Dreams'.⁵⁶ The review preceded the publication of Redon's lithograph *Cheval ailé*, which appeared as a frontispiece the following month, in June 1894.

In his memoirs Thadée affectionately reminisced about the artists of *La Revue Blanche*, calling them '*un petit groupe*



Figure 29 Henri-Gabriel Ibels, *La paysanne au panier* ('Peasant Woman with a Basket'), lithograph, frontispiece to *La Revue Blanche* 7(33), July 1894, 230mm x 145mm. British Museum, 2018,7086.1.12. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan

d'amis.⁵⁷ Above all, Vuillard and Bonnard were the artists closest to him. He evoked the early days of the magazine when they would all congregate at the offices in the rue des Martyrs. Later, when the review moved to the rue Lafitte, Toulouse-Lautrec was a constant presence there. Thadée commissioned work by many of the Nabi artists who documented his life with Misia through numerous paintings, particularly of the latter, who featured on the cover (designed by Toulouse-Lautrec) of the final instalment of the influential print album, *L'Estampe Originale*. This album was the creation of the talented and enterprising publisher André Marty. He commissioned prints not only by well-known artists and printmakers but also by young avant-garde artists. He also enticed painters and sculptors (like Auguste Rodin) into making their first prints for his publication. *L'Estampe Originale* appeared for only two years, just before *La Revue Blanche*'s frontispieces, between 1893 and 1895, but despite its short run it had a profound influence on the publication of original prints during the 1890s. It was clearly the inspiration behind the album of prints later issued by *La Revue Blanche* in 1895.

An advertisement in *La Revue Blanche* in December 1894 announced that the prints featured in the magazine that year would be united in an album of 100 copies (the deluxe edition would contain prints signed and numbered by the artists),



Figure 30 Henri-Gabriel Ibels, cover for *L'Escarmouche*, lithograph, no. 1, 12 November 1893. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES G-Z-318

and urged readers to purchase it for a New Year's gift.⁵⁸ In January the following year, another advertisement described *L'Album de la Revue Blanche* in more detail: the cover was by Bonnard, it would be priced at 25 francs and published in an edition of 50 (numbered only) available from the magazine's offices. It also stated that prospective purchasers could ask for it at the offices of *L'Estampe Originale*. An edition of 50 with signed and numbered prints was advertised a month later.⁵⁹ As the album was printed under the aegis of Marty's *L'Estampe Originale*, it can be assumed that the same printer, Edward Ancourt, would have been employed to oversee the project. The album is mentioned briefly by Thadée in an exhibition review of works by Toulouse-Lautrec, Vallotton and Bonnard.⁶⁰ The edition of the album sold well, and by 1948 it was extremely rare, as he noted in his memoirs.⁶¹

Artists' contributions became an integral part of the appearance of *La Revue Blanche*, and the images reproduced were as important as the written word. Vallotton, who had contributed a striking print of bathers for the series of frontispieces in 1894, became one of the main illustrators of the journal. This print was later used as an eye-catching advertisement for the magazine, appearing in *Le Cri de Paris* in 1897 (Figs 33-4).⁶² His distinctive black and white portraits appeared as photomechanical reproductions in virtually every issue until January 1902. Mostly of prominent



Figure 31 Charles Cottet, *Bretonnes sur la quai* ('Breton Women on the Quayside'), lithograph, frontispiece to *La Revue Blanche* 7(36), October 1894, 150mm x 205mm. British Museum, 2018,7086.1.15. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan



Figure 32 Charles Cottet, *Six bretonnes devant un pont* ('Six Breton Women in Front of a Bridge'), n.d., charcoal on pinkish beige paper, 303mm x 420mm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, kept at the Musée du Louvre, RF39281-recto. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Michel Urtado

cultural or political figures, a selection of these portrait prints was advertised for sale in 1895 for 1 franc on *papier bulle* (cheap paper).⁶³ In contrast, four years later, *La Revue Blanche* published his most psychologically penetrating series of prints, *Intimités*. A suite of 10 woodcuts, it appeared in an edition of 30, and all prints were numbered and signed. Five portfolios costing 250 francs each were printed on Japan paper; the remaining 25 cost 150 francs and were printed on *vélín* (wove paper). The blocks were destroyed after publication – this line was included in the advertisement to emphasise rarity value – and a free proof was included with each order.⁶⁴

Vallotton's prints and later illustrated books (published by *La Revue Blanche*) were also sold and exhibited at the

magazine's offices along with lithographs by Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, Denis, Roussel and Vuillard.⁶⁵ Exhibitions at *La Revue Blanche* were a frequent occurrence, as they were at the offices of several other *petites revues*. As early as 1881, Redon had a one-man show at the offices of *La Vie Moderne*. *La Plume's* offices played host to the annual Salon des Cent exhibition, which was an exhibiting society that specialised in selling reasonably priced prints to the general public. Founded in 1894 by Léon Deschamps, the editor of *La Plume*, the salon's exhibitions usually took place at 31 rue Bonaparte, where the magazine was based. Exhibitions were held regularly at the aforementioned *La Revue indépendante*, and Fénéon organised small exhibitions at the magazine's offices that included work by Manet, Rodin,

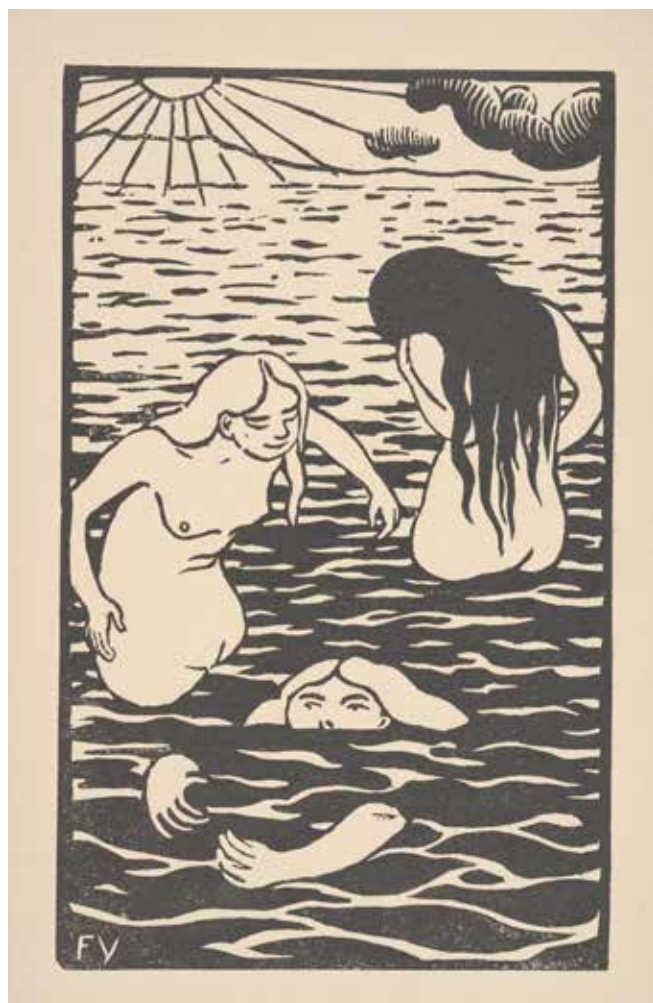


Figure 33 Félix Vallotton, *Les trois baigneuses* ('The Three Bathers'), woodcut, frontispiece to *La Revue Blanche* 6(28), February 1894, 180mm x 110mm. British Museum, 2018,7086.1.7. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan



Figure 34 Félix Vallotton, *Les trois baigneuses*, reproduction of a woodcut, advertisement for *La Revue Blanche*, in *Le Cri de Paris*, 21 February 1897, p. 22. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, DC-292 (C, 2)-FOL

Camille Pissarro and Berthe Morisot. He also organised an exhibition of work by Georges Seurat in 1900, where the painting *La Grande Jatte* (1884–6; measuring 2 by 3 metres) was exhibited at *La Revue Blanche*'s grand new offices, designed by Henri van de Velde on the boulevard des Italiens.⁶⁶ Three humorous lithographic supplements to *La Revue Blanche* that appeared in 1895, called *NIB*, also featured printed images. The title was chosen by Toulouse-Lautrec and meant 'nothing' in French slang.⁶⁷ *NIB* cleverly combined images by Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard and Vallotton with satirical commentary by Tristan Bernard, Jules Renard and Romain Coolus (Fig. 35).⁶⁸ The lithographs were loosely inserted into the magazine, and deluxe editions of *NIB* could be purchased for 10 francs.⁶⁹

In 1897 *La Revue Blanche* published the results of a survey in which 25 important literary figures, including Stéphane Mallarmé and Émile Zola, were asked whether they thought French literature had suffered from the influence of foreign writing, especially Scandinavian literature.⁷⁰ Under the title 'Enquête sur l'influence des lettres scandinaves', Lugné-Poe's answer to the survey was an emphatic 'Non!' as he continued to put on plays by Ibsen and Strindberg at his Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. Lugné-Poe's connections with *La Revue Blanche* were close: he had not only attended the Lycée Condorcet

with Thadée and some of the Nabi artists, but had also shared a small studio at 28 rue Pigalle with Denis, Bonnard and Vuillard in 1890. He persuaded many of these artists, including Munch, to design programmes and sets for his theatrical productions.⁷¹

It is interesting to note that the role of the printmaker and printmaking generally was now so ubiquitous that a printing press made a knowing appearance in Vallotton's programme for Strindberg's play *The Father* (1887), which was performed at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in December 1894 (Fig. 36). In addition to the cast list, the programme shows two men with a printing press wheel clearly visible in the background; one of the figures (who closely resembles Strindberg) is pulling a print from a lithographic stone, as if he is printing the programme for his own play. Above is a message regarding original prints from *L'Estampe Originale*, and to the side of the figures is a reminder to read Henri Albert's article on Strindberg (Albert may be the second figure) in *La Revue Blanche*.⁷²

It was Strindberg who contributed to Munch's next significant appearance in *La Revue Blanche*.⁷³ In May 1896, two months after Munch's arrival in Paris, Meier-Graefé had succeeded in organising an exhibition of his friend's work at Bing's gallery. Sixty works were on show, and it was



Figure 35 Félix Vallotton and Jules Renard: 'Que les chiens sont heureux!...' ('That the Dogs are Happy!'), lithograph, *NIB*, supplement to *La Revue Blanche* 8(41), 15 February 1895, 335mm x 505mm. British Museum, 2018,7086.1.19. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan



Figure 36 Félix Vallotton, programme for *The Father* by August Strindberg for the Théâtre l'Oeuvre, 1894, lithograph, 266mm x 366mm. Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Collections Jacques Doucet Estampes, Paris, object number NUM EM VALLOTTON II

the chance for Parisians to experience Munch's major works to date. Among the paintings on display were *The Scream* (1893) and *Madonna* (1894–5) along with their graphic counterparts. Other prints included: *The Sick Child* (1894), and *Death in the Sickroom* (1896).⁷⁴ For his review of the show, Strindberg submitted a curious piece to *La Revue Blanche*. It took the unusual form of short prose poems dedicated to each picture. The hyperbolic language appeared almost to be competing with the complexity and power of the works, possibly parodying Munch's own expressive prose pieces.⁷⁵ They were also accompanied, not by any illustrations of the paintings and prints on display, but by odd diagrams, possibly reflecting the author's current interest in alchemy (Fig. 37). Not surprisingly Munch was annoyed with the review, and it was a lost opportunity to have his work

displayed in this major avant-garde journal. To compound Munch's despair, the exhibition was not a success, and it garnered a slew of mainly negative reviews, with possibly the most damning from Camille Mauclair in *Mercure de France*. He accused Munch of subjecting the public to repulsive, ugly subjects, badly drawn works and infantile etchings.⁷⁶

However, Bing's exhibition was to lead to a rare appearance in a journal for Munch. *L'Aube* was a short-lived venture founded by Adolphe van Bever and Pierre Guédy and ran for just over a year from April 1896 to July 1897. A few months before Munch's portrait print of Knut Hamsun appeared in *PAN*, as discussed earlier, Van Bever wrote to Munch asking him to contribute a work for his magazine and Munch replied agreeing to collaborate.⁷⁷ In June 1896 a reduced version in dark green ink of his lithograph

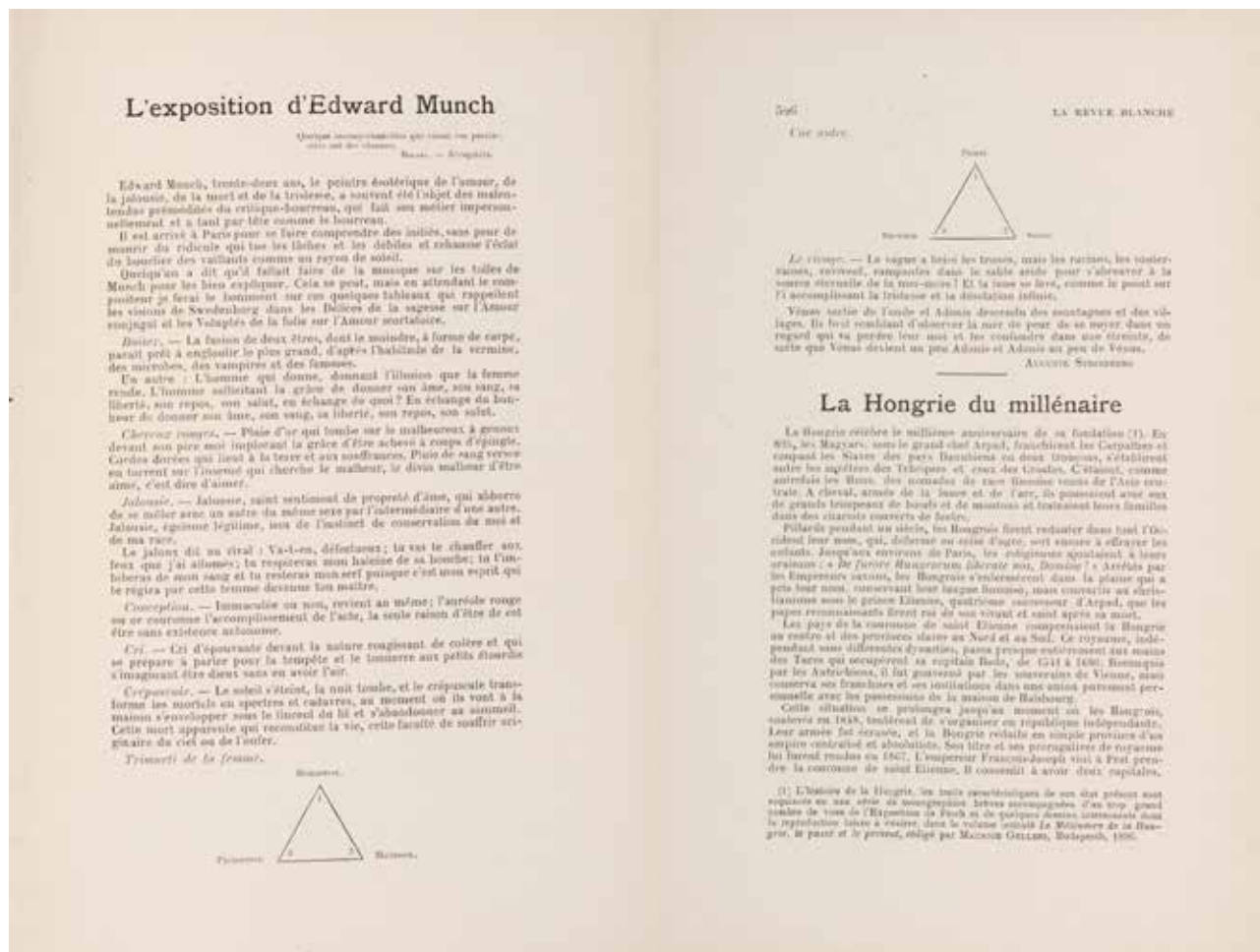


Figure 37 August Strindberg, *The Exhibition of Edward Munch*, *La Revue Blanche* 10(72), 1 June 1896, pp. 525–6, 250mm x 165mm (each page). British Museum. Presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan

Madonna appeared; unusually, it was signed in the stone 'EM' (Fig. 38). The artist's monogram appears in the lower left of the print and does not seem to occur in any other recorded impressions. It was also the first and only time that one of Munch's works was given such prominence in a French journal while he was resident in Paris. A small paragraph on Munch's exhibition at Bing's was printed opposite the image. The author Louis Radiguet refers to him as a powerful and original artist with the ability to convey singular and violent sensations to the viewer and points to the shock of seeing one canvas: 'où un enfant hurle sa terreur vers un ciel empourpré avec une vigueur extraordinaire' – a direct reference to *The Scream*.⁷⁸ The French Symbolist poet Mallarmé, of whom Munch had made two print portraits, a lithograph and an etching, kept this image from *L'Aube* in his library until his death.⁷⁹

Unlike Strindberg, Munch did not gravitate naturally to the circle around *La Revue Blanche*; indeed, despite the negative review by Mauclair, he tended to be part of the *Mercure de France* group, attending the soirées held by its editor Alfred Valette and his wife, as the German writer Oscar Schmitz recalled: 'Sometimes Hermann-Paul brought along the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, who would sit the whole night long vacantly in our midst'.⁸⁰ Later articles on Munch in that journal, and in *L'Hermitage* and *La Critique*, display a deep understanding and appreciation of his work akin to that shown earlier by Thadée.⁸¹ However,

Munch is not mentioned in Thadée's reminiscences and does not feature much in *La Revue Blanche* after Strindberg's review until 1903, when it ceased publication due to financial difficulties, having wound up its publishing house the year before.⁸² Yet the links between the artist and those surrounding the journal are tantalising. For example, Munch was clearly influenced by Toulouse-Lautrec. In his review of the 1896 Salon des Indépendants, Thadée states that Munch is not an artist unknown to readers of the journal and singles out the painting *Rose and Amélie* (1893).⁸³ This work of two buxom prostitutes playing cards bears all the hallmarks of Toulouse-Lautrec. It is well known that Munch acquired a set of the artist's *Elles* series of prints. Vallotton, too, appears to have been another key artist whom Munch must have studied, and indeed Meier-Graefé compares the two in his 1898 publication on Vallotton.⁸⁴

During Munch's time in Paris articles on him appeared only intermittently in the *petites revues*, possibly indicating a general lack of interest in his work.⁸⁵ However, some did see in Munch the same qualities that Thadée Natanson recognised in his first review of the artist's work. Yvanhoé Rambosson, writing in *La Plume* about the Salon des Indépendants in 1897, singled out several works by Munch on display. He describes the painting *Anxiety* (1894) as full of fantastic and powerful figures and is troubled by the lithograph *Death in the Sickroom* (1896), which is reproduced with the article (Fig. 39). Above all, he notes that Munch

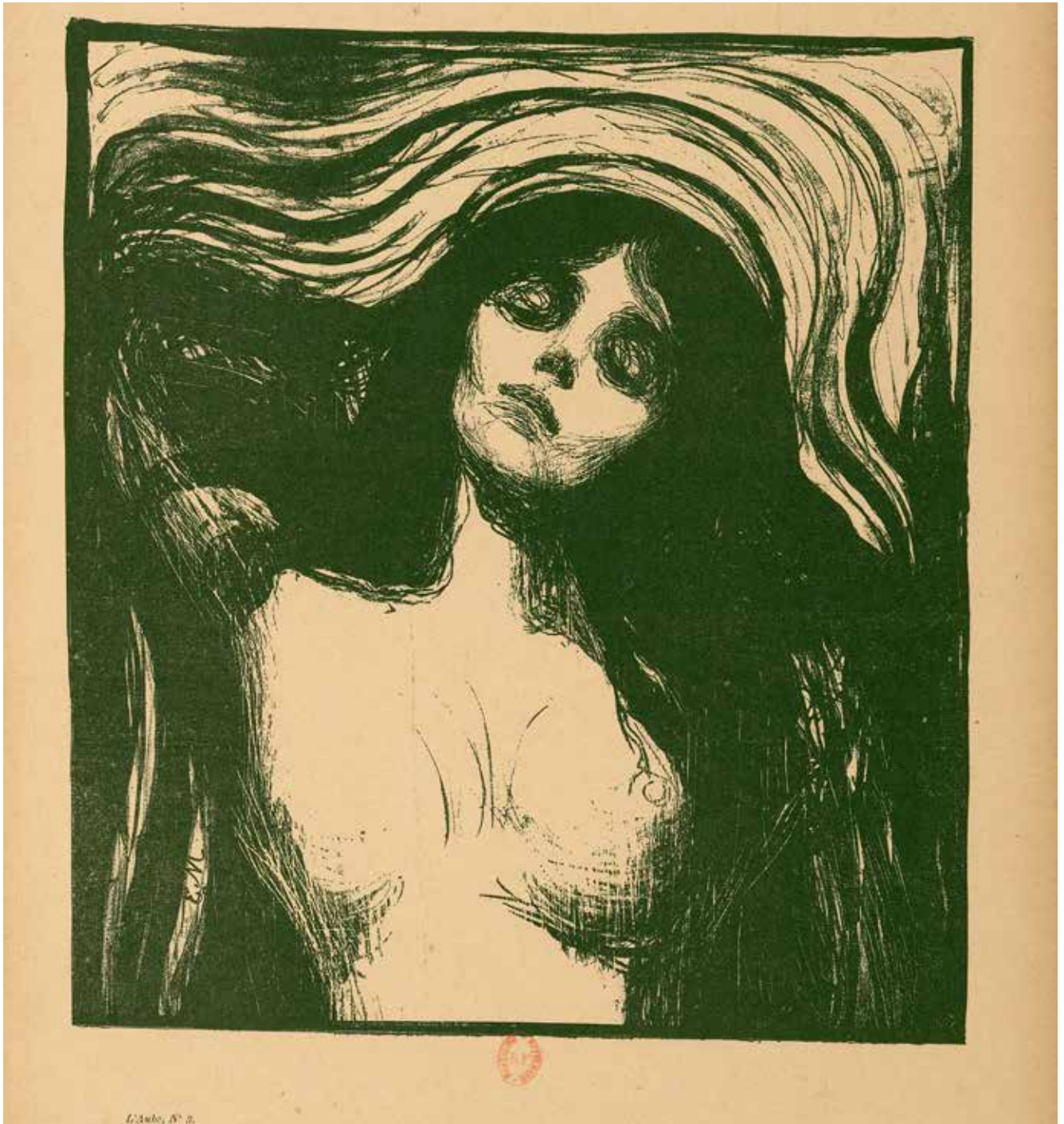


Figure 38 Edvard Munch, *Madonna*, lithograph in dark green ink in *L'Aube*, no. 3, 1896, opposite p. 47, 320mm x 245mm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, FOL-Z-761

achieves a heightened terror in his work through a combination of colour and line.⁸⁶

Munch had come to Paris with the intention of making prints and to ultimately further his career, using his appearance in *La Revue Blanche* as an entrée into the city's art scene. As discussed above, while this was not altogether a success, his visit was not a complete failure either. Fairly early on while in Paris, Munch was introduced to the ambitious young dealer Ambroise Vollard by Meier-Graefe. Vollard wanted to emulate Marty's *L'Estampe Originale*, and between 1896 and 1897 issued two large albums of prints, mostly lithographs by artists working in Paris. He approached Munch and asked him to contribute to the first portfolio, *L'Album des peintres-graveurs*, which was published in

1896 in a limited edition of 100, containing 22 prints priced at 100 francs. As the Société des peintres-graveurs français had excluded foreign artists since 1891, Vollard made a point of inviting non-French artists to participate in his print projects, such as Munch and two *La Revue Blanche* artists: Rippl-Rónai and Vallotton.⁸⁷

Munch made the print *Angst* for Vollard's portfolio with the help of the printer Auguste Clot, who skilfully produced the lithograph with two different colours on one stone (**Fig. 40**). The red sky seems to echo the lines in Munch's poem that accompanied *The Scream*, '*rouges comme du sang et comme des langues de fer*'. Munch developed a close working relationship with Clot during his time in Paris, producing some of his most powerful lithographs of mainly reinterpretations of



Figure 39 Edvard Munch, *Death in the Sickroom*, 1896, reproduction of a lithograph in *La Plume*, no. 194, 15 May 1897, p. 311. Bibliothèque nationale de France, ark:/12148/bpt6k15601c

earlier paintings.⁸⁸ In the listing of works from the portfolio, Munch's print is mistakenly described as a woodcut, and titled *Le Soir*. It is also noticeable that many of the artists who contributed prints to Vollard's first album were from the circle of *La Revue Blanche*, for example Bonnard, Denis, Redon, Rippl-Rónai, Vallotton and Vuillard. Vollard's gallery had various iterations on the rue Lafitte, sharing the same street as the journal during the most productive years of its existence, when it was most committed to the Nabi artists championed by Thadée.

It is not hard to speculate that perhaps Munch came to Vollard's attention from reading *La Revue Blanche* and seeing the reproduction of *The Scream* within its pages. By a strange coincidence, on the back of the edition of the magazine that carried the reproduction of Munch's work is an advertisement for Paul Cézanne's first exhibition held at Vollard's gallery, which was given a glowing review by Thadée in the same issue. This demonstrates the close-knit world of the Paris art community where many of the writers of *La Revue Blanche* contributed to or founded other journals and the majority of artists produced prints for many different publications or mixed portfolios. They all shared the same goal, which above all was to disseminate knowledge and to provide art to the general public at an affordable price. However, for commercial reasons, paradoxically these magazines also emphasised an exclusivity among collectors by promoting prints on different papers or as proofs without letters, signed and

numbered and in different edition sizes: *éditions ordinaires* or the rarer *éditions de luxe*. It was also an enclosed world of cliques, and as an outsider and foreigner Munch possibly found it difficult to be accepted by some chauvinistic French critics, the great exception being Thadée Natanson in 1895. Although Munch's visibility in the *petites revues* never matched his first appearance in *La Revue Blanche*, despite full-page images of his work featuring in *PAN* and *L'Aube*, his time in Paris with regard to printmaking was an inspirational turning point in his career. Not only did he spend fruitful hours in Clot's lithography workshop, but he undoubtedly felt the impact of these artistic journals on his work. While in Paris Munch explored the possibilities of the woodcut technique and Gauguin is always cited as his main influence. However, the influence of woodcuts by Vallotton, which he must have seen in *PAN* and *La Revue Blanche*, should not go unmentioned. Neither should the works he encountered in the two extraordinary journals *Perhinderion* (containing images of prints by Albrecht Dürer and other Old Masters) and *L'Ymagier*, the latter featuring old and contemporary woodcuts. Both were edited by Jarry, a frequent contributor to *La Revue Blanche*.⁸⁹

Exposure to the world of journals with its buzzing network of writers and artists jostling for position to appear in the latest edition can only have opened Munch's eyes to the opportunities provided by having one's work published in such a format. It may have even influenced his decision to contribute prints to the German periodical *Quickborn* in 1898.⁹⁰

The impact of Munch's time in Paris stayed with him for the rest of his life. He went on to develop his own distinctive style of printmaking once he returned to Norway, having gained valuable experience of being in a milieu where the print reigned supreme.

Appendix

This is a complete list of the original prints published as frontispieces in *La Revue Blanche* from July 1893 to December 1894. All are lithographs with the exception of one woodcut by Félix Vallotton. British Museum registration numbers – 2018,7086.1.1-17:

- Édouard Vuillard, *Intérieur* ('Interior'), 5(21–2), July–August 1893 185 x 120mm
- Ker-Xavier Roussel, *Deux femmes conversant (La terrasse)* ('Two Women Conversing [The Terrace]'), 5(23), September 1893 180 x 85mm
- Maurice Denis, *Les pleureuses* ('The Mourners'), 5(24), October 1893 160 x 85 mm
- Paul Ranson, *Femme à éventail* ('Woman with Fan'), 5(25), November 1893 175 x 85mm
- Pierre Bonnard, *Parisiennes* ('Parisian Women'), 5(26), December 1893 210 x 125mm
- Édouard Vuillard, *La couturière* ('The Dressmaker'), 6(27), January 1894 250 x 165mm
- Félix Vallotton, *Les trois baigneuses* ('The Three Bathers'), 6(28), February 1894 180 x 110mm
- Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Carnaval* ('Carnival'), 6(29), March 1894 250 x 165mm
- Ker-Xavier Roussel, *Noli me tangere*, 6(30), April 1894 225 x 140mm
- Paul Sérusier, *La marchande de bonbons* ('The Sweet Seller')



Figure 40 Edvard Munch, *Angst*, 1896, lithograph from Ambroise Vollard portfolio, *L'Album des peintres-graveurs*, 1896, 420mm x 385mm. Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, collections Jacques Doucet Corpus Estampes, Paris, object number NUM VI P 20

- or *La marchande ambulante* ('The Street Vendor'), 6(31), May 1894 220 x 135mm
- Odilon Redon, *Cheval ailé* ('Winged Horse'), 6(32), June 1894 160 x 115mm
- Henri-Gabriel Ibels, *La paysanne au panier* ('The Peasant Woman with a Basket'), 7(33), July 1894 230 x 145mm
- József Rippl-Rónai, *Femme et lampe* ('Woman and Lamp'), 7(34), August 1894 195 x 150mm
- Pierre Bonnard, *Femme au parapluie* ('Woman with an Umbrella'), 7(35), September 1894 250 x 160mm
- Charles Cottet, *Bretonnes sur la quai* ('Breton Women on the Quayside'), 7(36), October 1894 150 x 205mm
- Paul Ranson, *Fille étendue* ('Girl Lying Down'), 7(37), November 1894 135 x 220mm
- Maurice Denis, *La visitation* ('The Visitation'), 7(38), December 1894 160 x 125mm

Notes

- 1 Sketchbook dated 1935 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.T.2705, 2-4).
- 2 See, for example, Torjusen 1978, 185–212; Woll 1991, 240–75; Langdale 2005, 25–47.
- 3 De Gourmont 1900. Remy de Gourmont worked for the Bibliothèque nationale until 1891.
- 4 De Gourmont 1900, 1. *La Revue Blanche* and *La Plume* were both founded in 1889; *Mercur de France* and *L'Hermitage* were founded a year later. In 2018 a near-complete run of *La Revue Blanche* from 1891 to 1900 was acquired by the British Museum, presented by James A. Duncan and Laura M. Duncan; for issues with frontispieces see inv. nos 2018.7086. 1-17. It formed an important part of the contextual research associated with the exhibition *Edvard Munch: love and angst* (British Museum, 2019). For this essay I consulted this run of the journal and the digitised copies of the Bibliothèque nationale on Gallica, www.gallica.bnf.fr (accessed 19 November 2020).
- 5 Mentioned in Prideaux 2005, 73. The list of commandments was attributed to Jaeger and appeared in *Impressionisten*, no. 8, February 1889. The journal ran from 1886 to 1890 and was edited by Krohg.
- 6 Datta 1999, 31.
- 7 Ibid., 33.
- 8 *La Revue Blanche* 9(60), 1 December 1895, 528. For Munch's attempts to write about *The Scream* in French, see notes on the verso of a letter to Count Kessler (Munchmuseet, Oslo MM.N.3524).
- 9 Hammer 1895, 474–7.
- 10 Natanson 1895, 477–8. Natanson had been invited to Kristiania by students of the 'Association norvégienne' regarding a conference on the Franco-Prussian War. See Eggum 1991, 192.
- 11 Cahn 2012, 46.
- 12 See the letter dated 25 May 1895 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.K.1384) from Walfrid Wasteson, owner of the Blomqvist Gallery, to Munch, agreeing to the exhibition, the number of works and the dates of the show (1–31 October 1895). Munch paid 500 kroner to rent the premises.
- 13 'Literary Sketches' (Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.N.415, 3v).
- 14 Clarke 2009, 96.
- 15 Albert 1893, 91–2. A year later Albert noted the publication of Stanisław Przybyszewski's book on Munch, containing four essays on the artist: Przybyszewski 1894; see Albert 1894a 'Das Werk des Edvard Munch', 385. Henri-Albert Haug was the first person to translate the works of Friedrich Nietzsche into French and edited his complete works, which were published by *Mercur de France*. He was also a contributor to *La Revue Blanche*.
- 16 See letter dated 26 July 1895 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.N.2399). Munch had previously stayed in Paris for a few months at a time during the years 1889–91. His stay from the end of February 1896 to May 1897 was the longest time he spent in the city.
- 17 Postcard dated 12 December 1895 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.K.2908).
- 18 Munch's portfolio was expensive. Baedeker's *Handbook for Paris* (1891) advises travellers to budget for 30–40 francs a day, with supper at a first-class restaurant costing around 10–15 francs.
- 19 Toulouse-Lautrec's colour lithograph of Marcelle Lender in the operetta *Chilpéric*, which cost 10 francs for a signed and numbered impression from an edition of 100, was published in the German edition of *PAN* in 1895. This print cost Meier-Graefe his job. He was sacked by the conservative German owners who were appalled by what they considered a prime example of frivolous French excess. Their main concern was to promote solid German art through their publication.
- 20 Munch's portrait of Hamsun appeared in *PAN* 11(2), 1896, 172a. For information about the supplement, see Woll 2019, 103.
- 21 'A tous, lectrices et lecteurs. Salut!', *La Revue Blanche* 1(1), 1 December 1889, 1. The best introduction in English to the journal is Waller and Seiberling 1984. The standard texts on the journal are: Hermann 1959; and Jackson 1960. See also Bourrelie 2007.
- 22 Alexandre Natanson was the eldest brother who looked after the finances; Thadée Natanson was in overall charge in the role of 'directeur'; Louis-Alfred Natanson wrote for the journal under the name of 'Alfred Athis'.
- 23 Later the review's offices would move to 1 rue Lafitte in 1894 and finally, in 1899, to 23 boulevard des Italiens.
- 24 For 'Sensitiva Amorosa', see *La Revue Blanche* 3(10), July 1892, 1–9; 'Sur les bancs de Terre-Neuve' appeared in *La Revue Blanche* 4(19), May 1893, 333–40. In 1894 Hamsun's piece was published in a French anthology of Scandinavian writing; see De Néthy 1894.
- 25 See Albert 1894b, 481–98; Albert 1895, 188–90; Bordeaux 1894, 193–214; Bjørnson 1897, 86–92.
- 26 Félix Fénéon was an employee of the Ministry of War and also part of the anarchist movement, which between 1892 and 1894 carried out a series of bombings in France. This led to a round-up of the perpetrators, and he was put on trial with a number of other revolutionaries. Known as the 'Trial of the Thirty', they were all later acquitted. Thadée provided Fénéon with legal help. See Cahn 2020, 110–3.
- 27 *La Revue Blanche* 12(91), 15 March 1897. The commune issue was published as a volume later that year.
- 28 In 1894 Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the intelligence service, was wrongly accused of spying and arrested for treason, tried and sent to a penal colony. His case divided French society as there were many rumours that he was innocent. Émile Zola's famous letter 'J'accuse' appeared in the newspaper *L'Aurore* in 1898, attacking the establishment for covering up the truth. Dreyfus was finally pardoned in 1906.
- 29 Blum's first column on sport, written with Tristan Bernard, appeared in 1894: Bernard et Blum 1894 'Critique du Sport', 87–90. See also Gauthier-Villars 1896, 253–5; Gauguin and Morice 1897, 81–103 (a second part appeared in November); La Jeunesse 1900, 589–96; Douglas 1896, 484–90.
- 30 A useful overview of the diverse content of the journal can be found in Barrot and Ory 2019.

- 31 Jackson 1960, 30, 64. Arthur Jackson makes the fair point that, as a critic, Thadée was not in the business of criticising, but instead wanted to draw the public's attention to works by contemporary artists.
- 32 Thadée wrote about art in the journal from 1892 to 1898, and contributed occasional reviews until 1901. Georges Faillet also wrote for *La Plume* and *Mercure de France*.
- 33 See Félicien Fagus's review of Picasso's show at Vollard's gallery: Fagus 1901, 464–5.
- 34 Rather than works after Old Masters or prints of antiquities like those offered in the early years of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.
- 35 A notice about the prints appeared under the heading 'Chronique', *Paris à l'eau-forte* 4, April–July, 1874, 2. They were illustrations to Victor Hugo's last book, *Quatre-vingt-treize* ('Ninety-Three'), published that year. Richard Lesclide was editor-in-chief of the magazine and was Hugo's secretary from 1875 to 1885.
- 36 Edited by Émile Delarue, *La Vie Artistique* appeared from 1882 to 1883. Three free prints were available if the reader subscribed to the illustrated review *Musée Artistique* and the satirical magazine *La Nouvelle Lune*; an extra print was offered for half price (6 francs) if the reader also subscribed to the artistic weekly *Journal des Artistes*. A yearly subscription was 10 francs.
- 37 See note in *La Vie Artistique* 4, October 1882, 64, indicating that each drypoint published by the magazine could be purchased, unlettered, signed and numbered by the artist from major print dealers.
- 38 Founded by Fénéon and Georges Chevrier in 1884, the prints appeared in *La Revue indépendante* under the editorship of Édouard Dujardin. Prints by Albert Besnard, John Lewis Brown, Odilon Redon, Bois Seigneur and prints after 'croquis' (sketches) by Paul Helleu, Georges Seurat, Auguste Renoir, Jean-François Raffaëlli and James Abbott McNeill Whistler appeared in 1887. The following year it published prints by Paul Signac, Camille Pissarro, Jules Chéret, Louis Le Nain, Albert Besnard, Maximilien Luce, Winnaretta Singer and Lucien Pissarro. Signac's print relates to his painting *Sunday* (1888–90; Private collection).
- 39 See, for example, the endpapers of *La Critique*, which featured the page 'Galerie de la Critique' or 'Publications de la Critique', advertising prints and posters published by the journal for sale. *L'Image* also had extensive listings of the prints it published, and went as far as having its own house stamp on its prints.
- 40 Mellerio 1897, 4–6. Mellerio takes his argument further in his book, see Mellerio 1898.
- 41 *Les Peintres-Lithographes* published seven albums of 10 lithographs from 1892 to 1897.
- 42 The album was published in association with *PAN*, and the advertisement in that magazine went into great detail describing the different methods of printing, papers and editions available: 'lithographies, eaux-fortes, vernis mou, aquarelle, bois, gravure estampée, cérographie, procédés nouveaux'. It was printed on 'japon, vélin, hollandaise, chine et papiers à la forme'.
- 43 Compared with other journals per issue, *La Revue Blanche* was in the mid-price range. *La Critique* was the cheapest at 25 centimes; *La Plume* cost 60 centimes, *L'Estampe et l'Affiche* cost 1 franc. *L'Image* was the most expensive at 2½ francs.
- 44 Also exhibiting were Marc Mouclier, Ker-Xavier Roussel, Paul Ranson, Paul Sérusier, Henri-Gabriel Ibels (mistakenly listed as 'M.G. Ibels') and Félix Vallotton. See *La Revue Blanche* 5(25), November 1893, 336–41. The exhibition ran from 25 October to 5 November. Louis-Léon Le Barc de Boutteville ran one of the smaller galleries that exhibited experimental contemporary art, including work by the Nabis.
- 45 Denis met Lugné-Poe, Thadée and Alexandre Natanson at the Lycée Condorcet. Fellow pupils there, but slightly older, were Vuillard and Roussel. Denis was introduced to them by mutual friend Pierre Veber, who would later write for *La Revue Blanche*. It was Veber who introduced his schoolfriends to Bonnard, Ranson, Ibels and Sérusier when the artists were all attending the Académie Julian.
- 46 See Appendix for full list of the prints.
- 47 The setting of his lithograph closely resembles the scene in his painting *La Terrasse* (c. 1892; Musée d'Orsay, Paris).
- 48 The exhibition ran from 5 to 20 April 1894. Thadée Natanson reviewed it in *La Revue Blanche* 6(31), May, 472–3.
- 49 The group of mourners in *Les pleureuses* is extracted from his painting *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien* (1893), sold at Bonhams, London, 5 February 2013 (lot 7). His second frontispiece, *The Visitation*, was based on the painting, *Visitation en bleu* or *Visitation au colombier* (1894), sold at Sotheby's, London, 21 June 2005 (lot 332).
- 50 Bonnard's poster advertising the journal appeared in 1894. It depicted a fashionably dressed woman with a street urchin, with countless copies of *La Revue Blanche* behind them. Toulouse-Lautrec's poster featuring Misia Natanson appeared the following year.
- 51 'Il est heureux d'imprimer dans la revue, en compagnie qui lui plaise, une estampe, davantage d'avoir obtenu cette pierre de plus, rien que pour le double accent de vermillon ouvrant les lèvres d'un seul personnage'. Natanson 1948, 270–1.
- 52 Information from Eszter Földi, Head of Prints and Drawings, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Budapest (email to author, 22 October 2020). On Rippl-Rónai, see Földi 2015.
- 53 The print is sometimes known confusingly as *La marchande de chiffons* ('The Rag Seller'), the same title as that of a work that Sérusier had shown at Barc's gallery in 1893 and which is listed in the catalogue. However, the prints for the frontispieces were advertised as 'inédites' (unpublished), so the work exhibited in 1893 is unlikely to have been the one reproduced in *La Revue Blanche*. There is a preparatory ink sketch for the print (formerly Galerie Yannick Doyen, Vannes). See the website of the Paul Sérusier committee (C-073.Fig.), <http://www.comite-serusier.com/catalogue-raisonne-paul-serusier/la-marchande-de-bonbons/#> (accessed 21 November 2020). The website has no works under the title *La marchande de chiffons*.
- 54 Ancourt traced a preparatory drawing by Signac for his print for *L'Estampe Originale*. See Eckert Boyer 1991, 33. Roussel's frontispiece print (September 1893) has the look of a tracing and could also have been produced in a similar fashion, although a related drawing has yet to be identified.
- 55 The British Museum owns impressions of these portrait prints: see 1949.0411.3578–81.
- 56 The Redon exhibition ran from March to April. See: Natanson 1894, 470–2.
- 57 Natanson 1948, 279. Thadée's memoirs are mainly anecdotal and do not give any specific information on the production of the frontispieces for *La Revue Blanche*.
- 58 Advertisement in *La Revue Blanche* 7(38), December 1894, n.p.
- 59 Initially the album must have been published in an edition of 100, half of which were numbered and the other half both signed and numbered. Possibly more were produced due to demand, as Bouvet states that the album was produced in an edition of 110, see Bouvet 1981, 41. However, an album (2008.PR.13*) in the Getty Library, Los Angeles, is signed and numbered from an edition of 25.

- 60 *La Revue Blanche* 8(48), 1 June 1895, 524.
- 61 He writes that each artist had given a print for a frontispiece. See Natanson 1948, 244.
- 62 *Le Cri de Paris*, 21 February 1897, 22. This was a political magazine founded by Alexandre Natanson in 1897.
- 63 Advertisement in *La Revue Blanche* 9(52), 1 August 1895, n.p.
- 64 The advertisement appeared on the back cover of *La Revue Blanche* 17(132), 1 December 1898, declaring that the album was coming soon.
- 65 For example, as advertised in *La Revue Blanche* 8(49), 15 June 1895, under the heading 'Publications de La Revue Blanche ... exposé et en vente à ses bureaux'.
- 66 See the back cover of *La Revue Blanche* 21(164), 1 April 1900. The exhibition ran until 5 April.
- 67 Natanson 1948, 271.
- 68 *NIB* appeared as three supplements to the magazine in 1895: 'La photographie-amateur', Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Tristan Bernard (1 January 1895); 'Que les chiens sont heureux!', Félix Vallotton and Jules Renard (15 February 1895); and 'Carnavalesque', Pierre Bonnard and Romain Coolus (1 April 1895). A note should be made of the wording accompanying Toulouse-Lautrec's image of the clown Footit kicking his partner Chocolat, calling him a 'sale nègre', advertising Potin's chocolate. The language used would be deemed offensive today, but was considered 'humorous' at the time. This casual racism would have been accepted by a *fin-de-siècle* audience. Toulouse-Lautrec was a friend of Chocolat, the Havana-born clown whose name was Raphael and was depicted by the artist in an elegant stance as he danced at Achille's bar. This illustration was reproduced in *Le Rire* (28 March 1896). See Frey 1995, 400–1.
- 69 Toulouse-Lautrec and Vallotton also contributed to *La Chasseur de Chevelures* (The Hair Hunter), another satirical 'extra' that appeared within the pages of the magazine from 1893 to 1894, also edited by Tristan Bernard and Pierre Veber.
- 70 *La Revue Blanche* 12(89), 15 February 1897, 153–66.
- 71 Munch had produced two programmes for Lugné-Poe's productions of Ibsen's plays: *Peer Gynt* (1896) and *John Gabriel Borkman* (1897). For Munch's links with the theatre, see Coppel 2019, 96–127.
- 72 See Albert, 1894, 481–98.
- 73 He was very much part of the circle of the magazine that had published his contentious article 'De l'Infériorité de la femme'. Originally written in 1888, it appeared in *La Revue Blanche* 8(39), January 1895, 1–20.
- 74 Munch's exhibition at Bing's gallery is discussed by Gabriel P. Weisberg who cites Bing numbers from the exhibition catalogue for the following prints: *The Sick Child* (Bing no. 19); *The Kiss* (Bing no. 31); *Madonna* (Bing no. 35); *The Scream* (Bing no. 42); *Death in the Sickroom* (Bing no. 43); *The Lonely One* (Bing no. 49). The catalogue is rare and Weisberg references a copy from a private collection. See Weisberg 1986, 110–30.
- 75 Strindberg 1896, 525–6.
- 76 Maclair, C. 1896. 'Art', *Mercur de France* XIX(79), July, 187.
- 77 Adolphe van Bever explained in his letter that a new review (*L'Aube*) was to be published in April, that it would contain work of French and foreign artists, and that the first two issues (April and May) were already prepared. Letter to Munch, undated but must surely be 1896 (Munchmuseet, Oslo MM.K.04163). My thanks to Hilde Bøe from the Munchmuseet for sending me a scan of this letter as it has not yet been digitised on the Munchmuseet website (email to author 30 August 2021). See Munch's reply in a draft letter dated 1896 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.N.3399).
- 78 See Radiguet, L. 1896. 'Exposition de Munch', *L'Aube*, June, 47.
- 79 The print appeared in *L'Aube*, (no. 3, June 1896), opposite page 47. It is not mentioned under *Madonna* (Woll 39) in Woll 2012, 66–9. However, the work is noted as a reproduction of the print, but the existence of the monogram is not mentioned, nor is the print reproduced, see Woll 1991, 282 n. 11. The journal *L'Aube* is not on Gallica and appears to be extremely rare; it can only be consulted in person at the Bibliothèque nationale. This may account for the print not being reproduced in any of the literature on Munch's prints consulted for this essay. For Mallarmé's copy, see *La bibliothèque Stéphane Mallarmé*, Sotheby's, Paris, 15 October 2015 (lot 231), listed as 'Munch, Edvard. *The Madonna* [1896]. Lithograph (320 x 245mm). Illustration for n° 3 of the review *L'Aube*, edited by Philippe [sic] Guedy.'
- 80 Cited in Brothie 2011, 145. See also Bourrelle 2007, 383.
- 81 See Schmitz 1898, 207–18; Réja 1900, 9–11; Pica 1905, 517–30. Oscar Schmitz and Vittorio Pica were both advocates of French art and keen to spread the word in their native countries, Germany and Italy respectively. Réja was the pseudonym of Paul Meunier, a trained doctor and psychiatrist who was part of the *Mercur de France* circle. Munch executed a woodcut portrait of Réja in 1897.
- 82 In a few lines Fagus mentions Munch's work at the 1903 Salon des Indépendants, noting the 'jelly-like baby' in *The Inheritance* (1897–9). See *La Revue Blanche* 30(236), 1 April 1903, 543. Thadée had divorced Misia in 1904 and was declared bankrupt.
- 83 *La Revue Blanche* 10(69), 15 April 1896, 379.
- 84 Meier-Graefe 1898.
- 85 Rodolphe Rapetti mentions that Munch appeared in the French press around 20 times in 1896 when he exhibited at Bing's gallery. However, the following year, even though he had exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, his name appeared in fewer than 10 articles. Rapetti believes this indicates a certain indifference and hostility towards the artist among French critics. See Rapetti 1991, 26.
- 86 *La Plume* 194, 15 May 1897, 311–13. Rambosson was a friend of the artist and acted as an intermediary between Mallarmé and Munch when the latter was working on his two portrait prints of the poet.
- 87 The other foreign artists whom Vollard approached for prints were the Belgian Théo van Rysselberghe, British artist James Pitcairn-Knowles and the Dutchman Jan Toorop. See Pratt and Druick 2006, 190.
- 88 Along with Munch, Clot also printed work for Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis and Roussel. See Gilmour 1988, 129–82.
- 89 *Perhinderion* was published in 1896 in only two issues under the auspices of *Mercur de France*. See Chapter 3 in this volume by Ute Kuhlemann Falck on *L'Ymagier*.
- 90 See *Quickborn*, no. 4, January 1899; Emil Schering, the editor of this German avant-garde journal, wanted to produce a special issue devoted to Strindberg's writings with illustrations by Munch. See the article (in Swedish), Gram, M., 'Edvard Munch illustrerar August Strindberg', *Biblis*, no. 80, Winter 2017/18, <http://biblis.se/digitalt-arkiv/biblis-80/> (accessed 23 November 2020).

Chapter 3

L'Ymagier, Munch and the Woodcut Technique

Ute Kuhlemann Falck

Edvard Munch started to make prints in October/November 1894, and within just two years he quickly mastered the techniques of etching, lithography and woodcut. We know very little about Munch's motivation for taking up printmaking, and print historians are often left with more questions than answers.¹ The following chapter is an attempt to shed further light on Munch's possible inspiration for exploring the woodcut technique, but constitutes only a small step in an ongoing research project. While in 2015 the object of enquiry was Munch's adaptation of the woodcut aesthetic for some of his early lithographs, the focus now is on the principal aesthetics of Munch's early woodcuts.²

Munch made his first woodcut *Man's Head in Woman's Hair* (**Fig. 41**) in Paris in the autumn of 1896, at a time when the medium had already been rediscovered by a number of artists throughout Europe, including in Britain, France and Germany. With varying results, these artists shared an interest in the authenticity of the centuries-old print medium – both its making and its expression – and thus demonstratively turned away from increasingly industrialised printmaking techniques.³ The list of practising 'original' woodcut artists is long, and Munch was certainly inspired by the works of, for example, Félix Vallotton (**Fig. 42**) and Paul Gauguin (**Fig. 43**), as well as by Japanese woodcuts such as those by Katsushika Hokusai (**Fig. 44**), which had been popular since the 1860s.⁴

While one can observe a shared interest in the technique, there are also distinct differences in approach and results, suggesting the story may be more complex. Compared to Munch's simple yet bold woodcuts, Vallotton's and Hokusai's prints, for example, appear almost too perfect and controlled to qualify as precursory works, whereas Gauguin's coarse, yet detailed woodcuts seem rather intimate in contrast.

Besides stylistic differences, there are also some more formal aspects of Munch's early woodcuts that do not seem to match those of his contemporaries, particularly in relation to size and colour. From the very beginning, Munch showed a preference for large woodcuts. This stood in sharp contrast to other woodcut artists of his time whose works were roughly half the size of Munch's average woodcut. Furthermore, none of these artists experimented with the process of printing in colour to the same extremes as Munch. All these aspects – boldness in style, size and colour – can be found, however, in another possible source of inspiration, which hitherto has been overlooked by Munch scholars: early European woodcuts, especially popular broadsides.

Single-sheet woodcuts by the great Old Masters, such as Albrecht Dürer, had been appreciated as works of art and prime collectors' items ever since their production in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and hence were generally well studied and well known.⁵ Pre-Dürer woodcuts, cut in a simpler style of bold lines – as well as single-sheet broadsides for the popular market that were made for centuries alongside fine art prints – had not received the same attention. They had mainly been employed as documentary material in discussions on print-historical developments, such as the century-long debate on the national origins of printing and printmaking in general, and the woodcut technique in particular.⁶ It was not until the 1860s that a

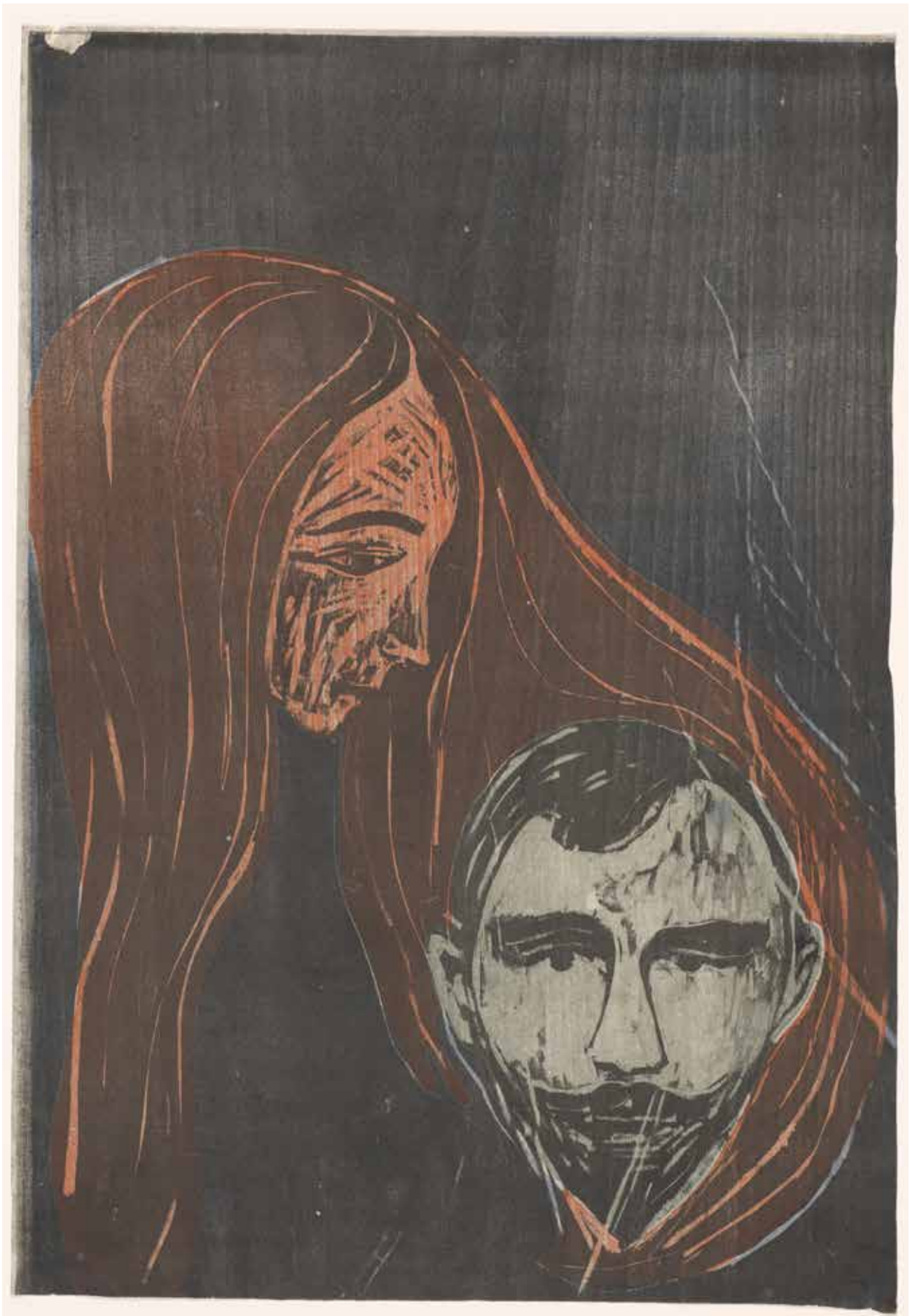


Figure 41 Edvard Munch, *Man's Head in Woman's Hair*, 1896, woodcut, printed in colour, 545mm x 385mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00569-09. Photo by Rena Li



Figure 42 (above left) Félix Vallotton, *The Swans*, 1892, woodcut, 253mm x 327mm. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), p1480V2000

Figure 43 (above right) Paul Gauguin, *Noa Noa: Nave Nave Fenua*, 1893–4, woodcut, printed in colour, 357mm x 208mm. Private collection, courtesy Galleri K, Oslo



Figure 44 Katsushika Hokusai, *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji: Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, 1831, woodcut, printed in colour, 246mm x 368mm. British Museum, 2008,3008.1JA



Figure 45 Title page to *L'Ymagier*, no. 1, October 1894, 265mm x 210mm. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

serious interest in early woodcuts took hold, leading to a rash of publications on early printmaking.⁷

From this point onwards – and well into the 20th century – early woodcuts were persistently presented as ‘archaic’ and ‘primitive’, and understood as the authentic, unspoiled expression of ‘common folk’. The woodcut technique became a powerful symbol for bridging the dichotomies of modern society: art with craft, cultured intellectuality with humble existence, and the individual with the masses.⁸

Munch had ample opportunity to read about or study historic woodcuts, either in original or reproductive form. Museums and auction houses regularly hosted exhibitions on the subject, the publication of reproductions flourished, and woodcuts were widely in the hands of private collectors. However, the link between early and contemporary woodcuts was never demonstrated more compellingly than in the highly creative French Symbolist art periodical *L'Ymagier*.⁹

L'Ymagier

Comprising only eight issues, *L'Ymagier* was a short-lived quarterly, from October 1894 to December 1896, precisely the period when Munch started to discover printmaking and the woodcut technique. *L'Ymagier* was a co-publication by the novelist and poet Remy de Gourmont and the eccentric avant-garde artist and writer Alfred Jarry.¹⁰ De Gourmont and Jarry shared, among other things, a deep interest in early woodcuts and simple broadsides such as *Images d'Épinal*. Jarry, keen to learn the woodcut technique for himself, spent the whole of July 1894 at the Pension Gloanec in Pont-Aven. One of the artists he met there, and whose images were to feature later in *L'Ymagier*, was Gauguin, who was working on his *Noa Noa* woodcuts. It is unclear how much direct

guidance Jarry received from Gauguin, but a certain similarity in style suggests that Gauguin's works constituted at least some form of inspirational source for Jarry.¹¹

As the editors declared in their first issue, the focus of *L'Ymagier* was the picture and its communicative power, in particular popular images and their effect on the viewer's imagination.¹² The creative, unpredictable layout ranges from pure-text pages to full-page illustrations, and from minute vignettes integrated with the text to large, garishly coloured fold-out broadsides. Each volume constitutes a work of art in itself, for which the complex printing and binding demands required a high degree of artistic creativity and practical coordination.¹³ Even if one, like Munch, does not read French well, the publication is a pure visual feast.

In fact, *L'Ymagier* is a picture book, rather than an illustrated book.¹⁴ The total run features more than 300 images, and the archaic-style title pages (Fig. 45) are followed by an eclectic mix of content, including illustrated essays on specific topics like ‘The Passion’ or ‘Monsters’. Printed music (Fig. 46) is joined by small reproductions of sophisticated woodcuts after Dürer, alongside bold real-size impressions from anonymous woodblock fragments. Contributions by contemporaries such as De Gourmont, as well as artists associated with the Nabis group, for example Émile Bernard (Fig. 47), contrast with gigantic crudely coloured broadsides, which need to be unfolded (Figs 48–9). With its variety of printed images, *L'Ymagier* demonstrates the richness and effectiveness of ‘primitive’ visual communication, which must have been extremely stimulating for any artist interested in printmaking.

The entertainment aspect as well as the didactic dimension of *L'Ymagier* should not be underestimated. The

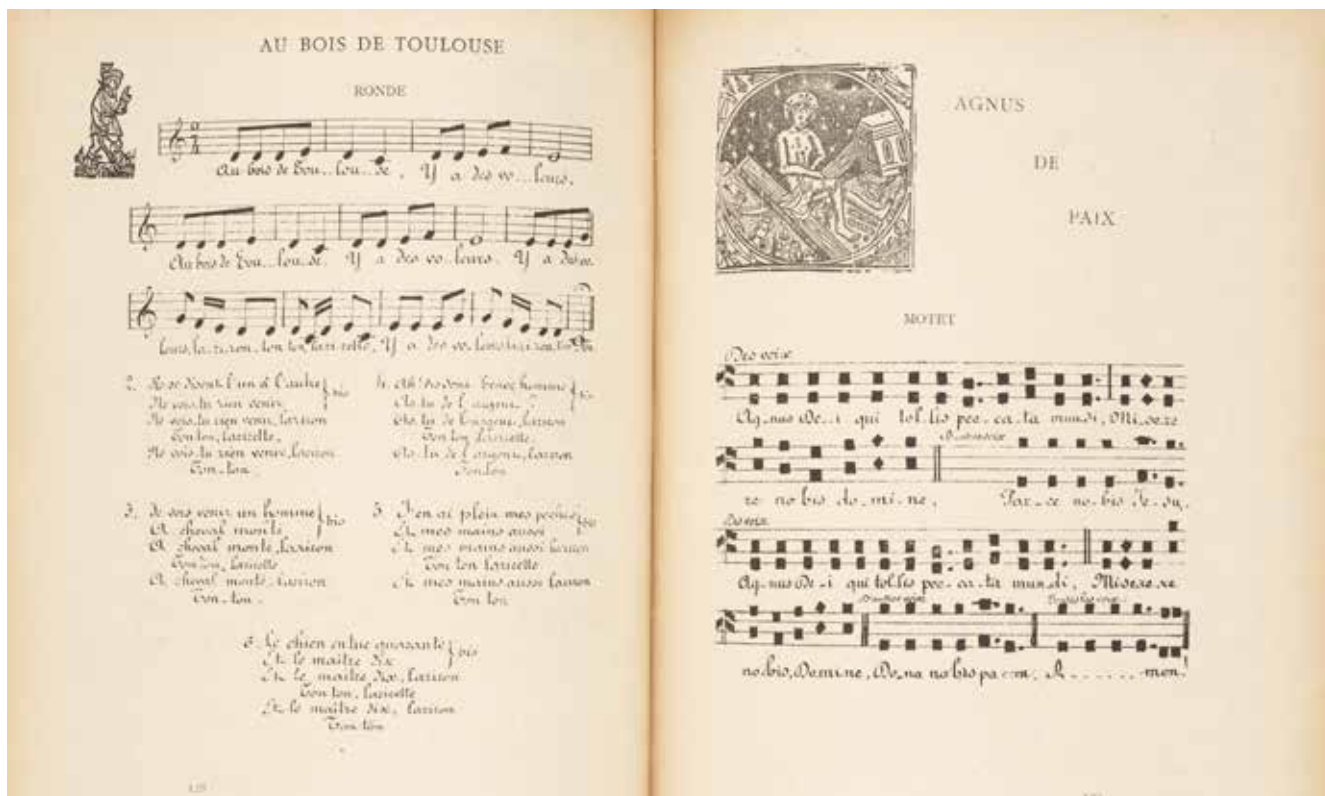


Figure 46 Printed music *Au Bois de Toulouse* and *Agnus de Paix*, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 2, January 1895, 265mm x 210mm. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(ii)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 47 Émile Bernard (falsely attributed to Armand Seguin), *Brettonnes*, 1894, woodcut, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 2, January 1895, 228mm x 186mm. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(ii)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



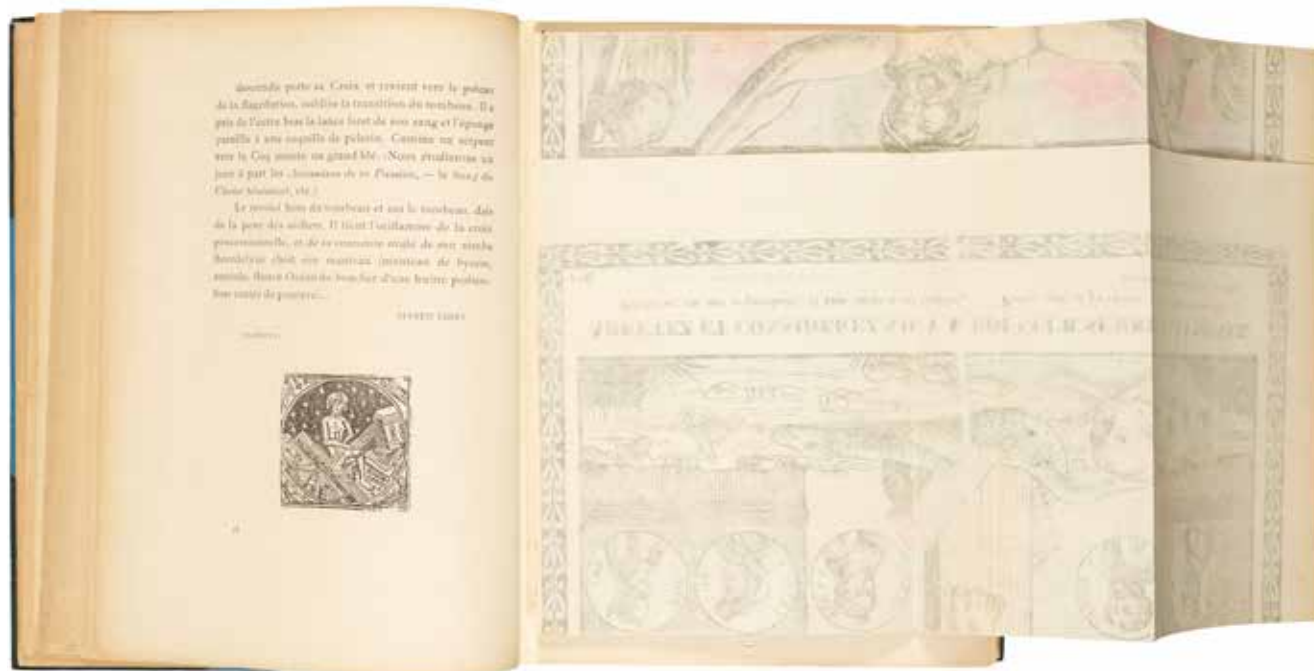


Figure 48 Inserted broadside, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 1, October 1894. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(i)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

journal takes the reader from one visual surprise to another, physically engaging them in turning pages as well as opening fold-outs, before further enticing them to decipher the old inscriptions of the woodcuts, for which one might have to seek the assistance of fellow viewers. The publication thus may become the focus of a conversation, which could then spin off on other, interesting tangents.

***L'Ymagier* and Munch**

Although it is not documented that Munch and the French editors-cum-publishers actually met, one may safely assume that Munch was well aware of *L'Ymagier*. We know that he was an avid reader of illustrated magazines and newspapers,¹⁵ and it is difficult to imagine that none of his friends or contacts would have shown him copies of the latest art magazine. This could have happened, for example, in Paris, when Munch visited in June and September 1895, interrupting his long-term stay in Berlin. It is believed that at that time he already knew the Norwegian composer William Molard, whose home was a popular meeting place for French and Scandinavian artists and intellectuals, including Jarry.¹⁶

Another possible link could be the publisher, writer and art critic Julius Meier-Graefe, who was one of the driving forces behind Munch's exploration of printmaking professionally. Meier-Graefe published privately a portfolio comprising eight Munch intaglio prints and an essay in June 1895.¹⁷ Despite temporarily moving to Paris in 1895, Meier-Graefe continued to promote Munch well into the 1900s and, for example, persuaded Siegfried Bing to hold an exhibition of Munch's work at his newly established Maison de l'Art Nouveau in 1895. Meier-Graefe was well connected internationally, and while he was living in Berlin he was in contact with De Gourmont, who is likely to have made Meier-Graefe aware of *L'Ymagier*.¹⁸ Meier-Graefe would certainly have been interested in the venture, especially as he was the co-founder and at that point still co-editor of the

elegant art journal, *PAN*. Founded in 1894, with publishing activity in Berlin between 1895 and 1900, *PAN* is generally considered one of the most important voices of Art Nouveau in Germany, as well as being among the most expensive art magazines of its time. One of its aims was to give an overview of contemporary art, without showing preference to any particular school, style or technique. *PAN*'s layout was modern, featuring a simple typeface, vignettes and illustrations, along with over 200 art supplements of known and unknown artists distributed across its 21 issues. Meier-Graefe's time at *PAN* was quite short; he was squeezed out in the summer of 1895, apparently due to his international aspirations for the journal. During this period, however, *PAN* placed an advertisement in *L'Ymagier*, which confirms a direct link between these two magazines and their editors.¹⁹ Hence, it is viable to speculate that Meier-Graefe had knowledge, if not physical copies, of *L'Ymagier*, and thus could have introduced Munch to it, either in Berlin or Paris. If this was indeed the case, then the experience of *L'Ymagier* may not only have prompted Munch's interest in the woodcut technique, but also may have pushed him to define a new, highly idiosyncratic woodcut aesthetic marked by boldness in line, colour and size.

Lithography and the historic woodcut aesthetics

Munch's exploration of the woodcut technique happened in two stages: initially he embraced the traditional woodcut aesthetic by creating stylised, boldly linear lithographs. Shortly afterwards, he started making actual woodcuts, when – very interestingly – he abandoned the linear woodcut aesthetic and replaced it with a new, rather idiosyncratic style. Both stages can be related to *L'Ymagier*. As I have argued in an earlier publication, various contemporary lithographs published in *L'Ymagier* have stylistic links with popular historic woodcuts, such as De Gourmont's *L'Annonciation* (Fig. 50).²⁰ De Gourmont achieved this by

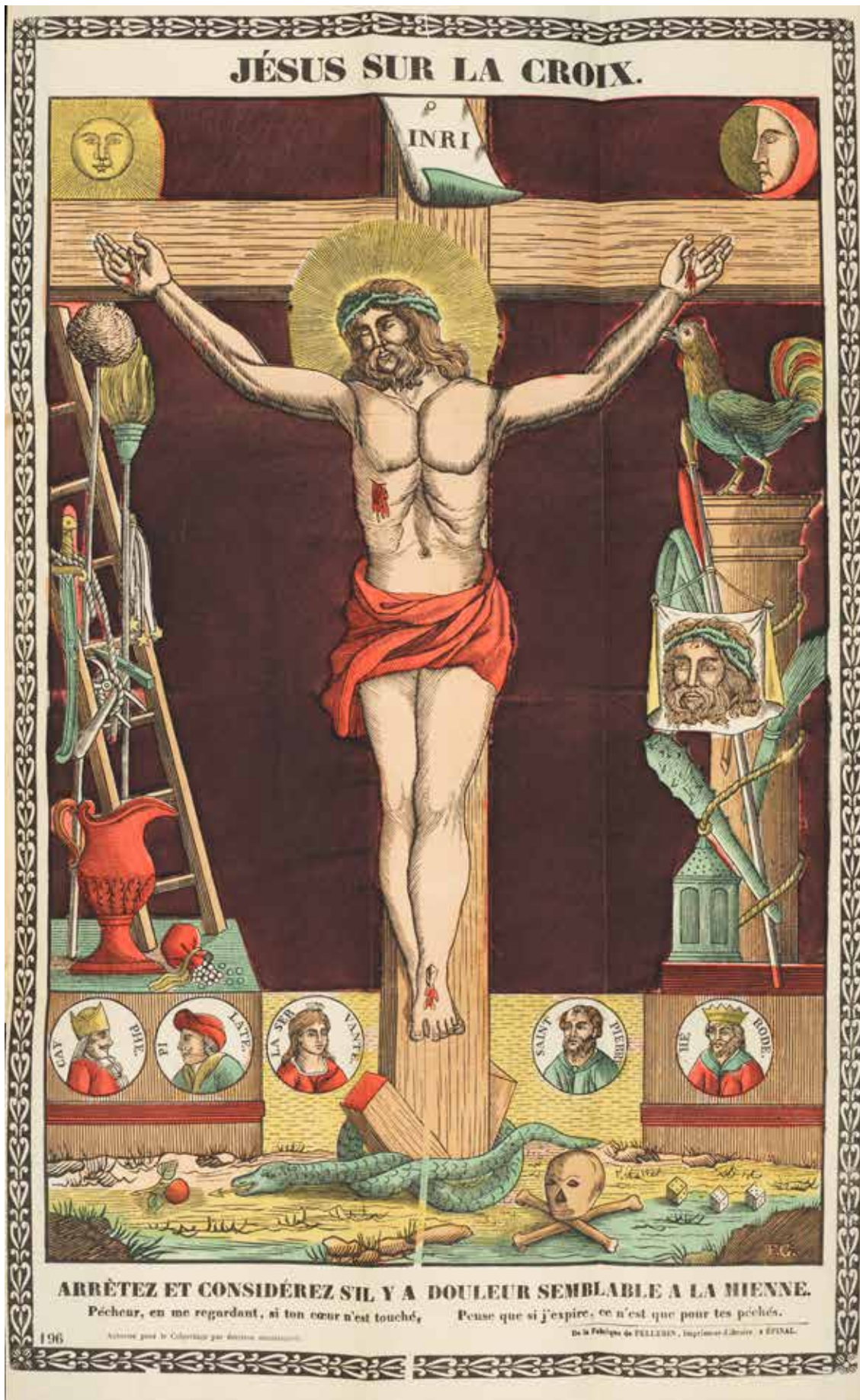


Figure 49 Francois Georgin, *Christ on the Cross*, 1824, woodcut coloured with stencils, 565mm x 360mm, photomechanically reproduced by Pellerin c. 1890 and published in *L'Ymagier*, no. 1, October 1894. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(i)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Figure 50 Remy de Gourmont, *The Annunciation*, 1895, lithograph, 237mm x 167mm, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 2, January 1895. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(ii)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

reducing his palette to solid black set against white paper, employing mainly simple, bold lines and flat areas, and – last but not least – framing the whole image with a line that is generally associated with historic woodcut illustrations.

L'Ymagier contains numerous historic as well as contemporary examples that share these characteristics. Besides these stylistic aspects, one also has to consider the strategic placement of the image, between two pages with German Renaissance woodcuts: the preceding page shows a work after Dürer's woodcut *The Seven Trumpets of the Apocalypse*, while on the following page we find the woodcut *St Gudula* after Hans Burgkmair.²¹

In Munch's early oeuvre there are three woodcut-like lithographs, all executed in 1895 and 1896, just before Munch actually started making woodcuts: *The Scream*, *Angst* and *By the Deathbed*.²² The particular woodcut aesthetic of these prints has been observed in literature,²³ although the significance of these observations remains essentially unexplored. Munch's iconic print *The Scream* (Fig. 51) has often been mistaken for a woodcut.²⁴ This is understandable as the image seems to tick most of the boxes that one generally associates with the woodcut technique, in particular the bold black and white contrast, and the angular, descriptive black lines, which in some parts are reminiscent of the pattern of wood grain, all enclosed by a prominent framing device. These elements stand in contrast with Munch's other early lithographs such as *Madonna* (1895) (see Fig. 7), which features lithographic drawing techniques

such as graduations, fine shading lines and hatchings.²⁵ It is difficult to believe that the allusions to the woodcut technique were not intended by the artist. It was perhaps Munch's experience of *L'Ymagier* that made him acutely aware of the power of early popular woodcuts, the bold aesthetics of which could easily be adapted to give his modern motifs about human anxiety a monumental, almost meta-historical dimension.

Munch's woodcut aesthetic

Once Munch actually started making woodcuts himself he seemed to be less concerned about the stylistic analogies he employed in his woodcut-like lithographs. Instead of recreating black lines in wood, he explored the materials and technique in a most original fashion, developing his ingenious 'jigsaw' technique of printing, which not only merged line, colour and format into one process but also pushed all of these aspects to the extreme.

Generally, Munch's woodcuts feature a limited number of lines. Instead of traditional black lines, he often employs fine white lines, sparsely, just enough to give shape and meaning to large uncut areas. Reducing his input to the minimum, Munch thus allows the structure of the wood to become an integral, if not the dominant part of the image. The highly economic use of white lines set against an otherwise uncut background may very well have been sparked by contemporary images found in *L'Ymagier*, such as De Gourmont's *Head of a Martyr* (Fig. 52).

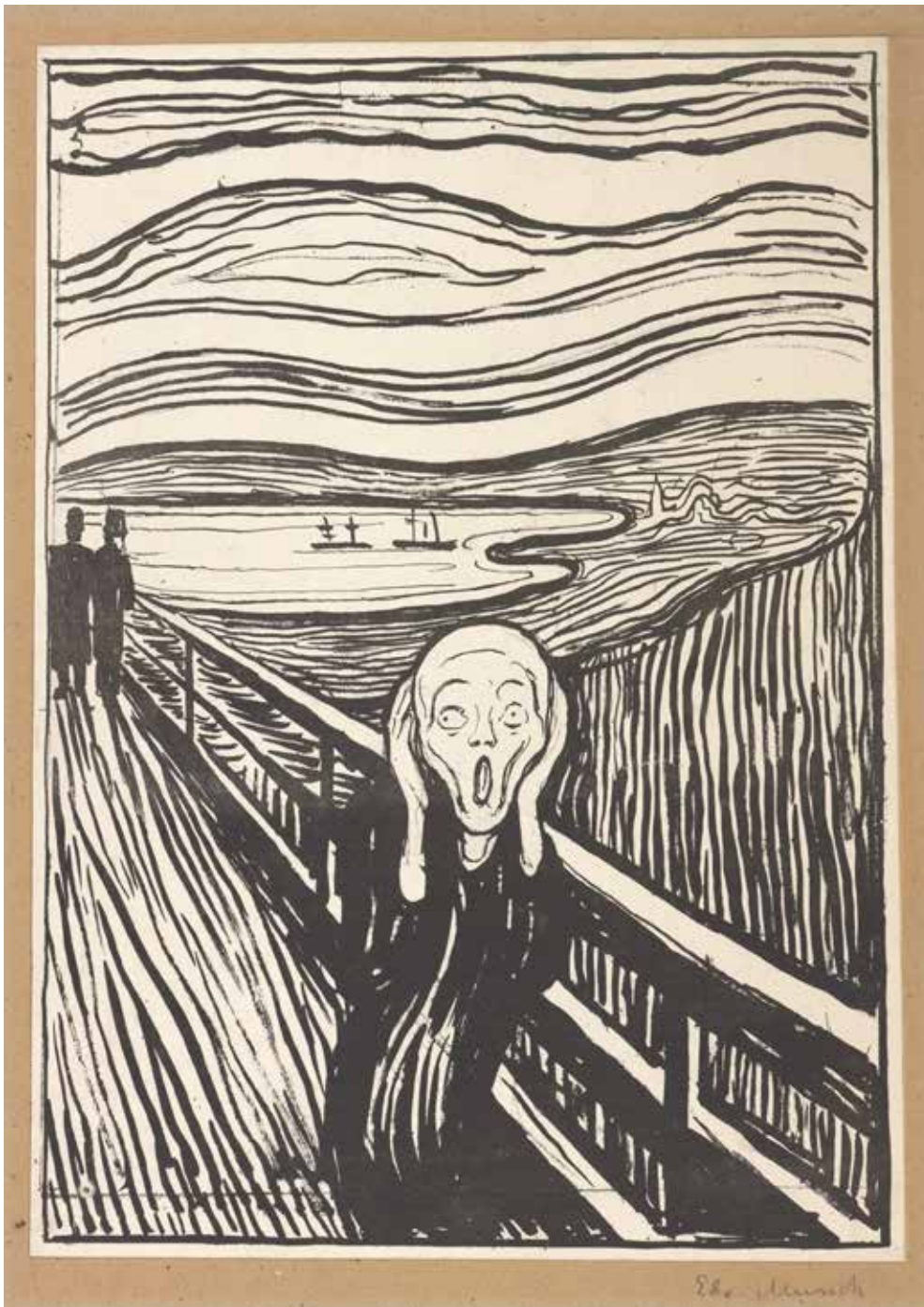


Figure 51 Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1895, lithograph, 355mm x 254mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00193-01. Photo by Tone Margrethe Gauden

Alongside lines cut into the block, there are further lines detectable in Munch's colour woodcuts: the outlines of the block segments, often defined by a distinct white line. These are a result of the production process. Blocks to be printed in colour were first sawn into pieces, inked and then reassembled like a jigsaw puzzle. The white lines mark the sawn edges of the blocks. Although not necessarily intentional, these lines bind the motif together in another, simplified manner, which correlates well with contemporary ideas of Synthetism and also archaic art.

Looking at Munch's etchings and lithographs, one can establish that he started off each technique printing in black and white, and only gradually explored the possibility of colour. In fact, many colour prints of Munch's early motifs are later impressions.²⁶ This approach stands in sharp contrast to his woodcuts, where he began with colour

printing. Even of his very first woodcut, *Man's Head in Woman's Hair*, we know of only one monochromatic impression, a proof that is hand-coloured in the fashion of the final colour version (**Fig. 53**). The fact that Munch started making woodcuts in colour indicates an underlying agenda, which at the same time seems to have prompted him to develop his rather unique 'jigsaw' technique.

Another interesting observation is Munch's preference for large-format woodcuts. His earlier etchings and lithographs are quite modest in size, often not more than 200–300mm. For example, *The Scream* lithograph measures 355mm x 254mm.²⁷ In contrast, *Man's Head in Woman's Hair* measures 545mm x 385mm, roughly double the size of his own early etchings and lithographs, as well as of the woodcuts of contemporary artists such as Vallotton and Gauguin.²⁸ In fact, this rather large format is quite common within

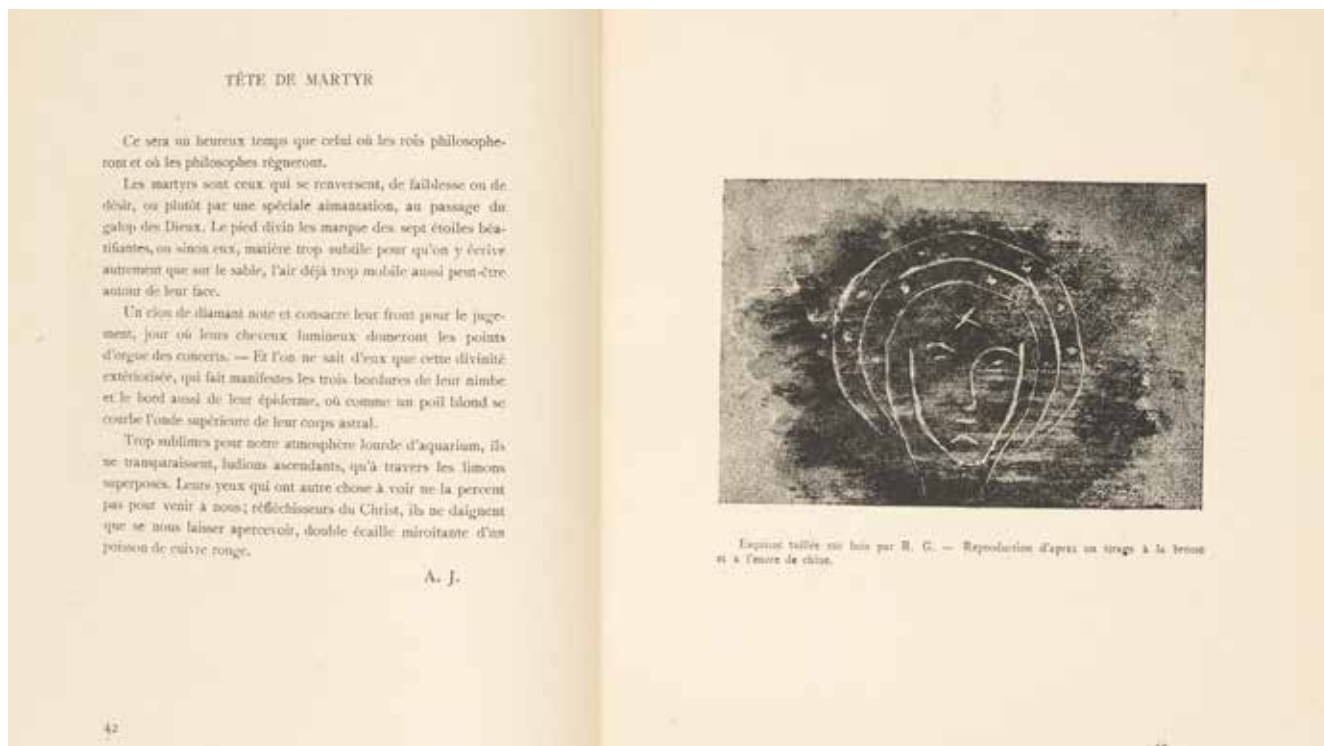


Figure 52 Remy de Gourmont, *Head of a Martyr*, 1894, woodcut, c. 70mm x 100mm, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 1, October 1894. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(i)-1894. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Munch's early woodcut oeuvre: *Moonlight I* (see **Fig. 109**), *Evening*, *Melancholy I* (see **Fig. 82**), *Summer Night*, *The Voice* (1896) and *Angst* (1896), to name just a few.²⁹ Even when Munch produced smaller woodcuts, such as *Encounter in Space* (1898–9), which measures only 190mm x 252mm, he had them printed (or mounted) onto much larger folio-size sheets.³⁰ He obviously had an affinity for large formats.

L'Ymagier and the broadside aesthetic

I suggest that Munch was inspired to think big and work bold in woodcut by his experience of popular broadsides, for example those published in *L'Ymagier*. The general visual communication concept behind the medium of broadsides is that they were made for the masses: they had to be cheap and easily understandable. The images are relatively simple and – as indicated by the large size – are meant to be consumed from a distance, perhaps displayed on a wall.

The eight issues of *L'Ymagier* contain a total of 16 broadsides, of which two are modern inventions. The majority of the others are from Épinal, with a few originating from Merz or Amiens. Most of the images are modern reprints from the older blocks, dating from the 1820s and 1830s, but there are also a couple of photo-mechanically reproduced images (**Fig. 54**) – an indicator that the editors were more concerned with the image than the process, in that it was not important whether the image was a restrike, a reproduction or an original. What counted most was apparently that the images created the desired impact and associations.

Colour is a crucial element in *L'Ymagier*,³¹ and although black dominates, a good number of the images and text elements are printed in another colour, often brownish-red, as seen for example on the title page of the first issue (**Fig. 45**). However, all the inserted broadsides were hand-

coloured with stencils, or – in the case of reproductions – have the appearance of being hand-coloured with stencils (**Figs 54–6**). Even the zincograph *La Passion* by Émile Bernard is fashioned with blotchy hand-colouring reminiscent of stencil colouring (**Fig. 57**).

Woodcut printing in colour can be done by producing different blocks, one carrying the main image (the key block) and others carrying one colour each (colour blocks). The more colours one wishes to print, the larger the number of blocks required. This relatively complex and time-consuming technique was mastered by Japanese printmakers, but in the Western world it was hardly employed; European historical woodcuts tend to be monochromatic, with the exception of chiaroscuro woodcuts. Early European woodcuts were generally coloured by hand, frequently with the help of stencils. Usually, one stencil would be produced for one colour, so that several areas of that colour could be applied simultaneously. The single segments were cut out by hand and therefore commonly have simple shapes. Typical telltale signs of hand-colouring by stencils are: simple shapes of colour, often with an angular appearance; no colour transition; and a limited number of colours. The use of stencils is most obvious when the job was done in a hurry and a stencil was not aligned properly with the print, so that all segments of one colour were printed equally misaligned. This was the rule rather than the exception in the production of cheap broadsides.

A good example of these aspects can be found in the broadside *Battle of the Pyramids* (**Figs 56, 58**) and the zincograph *The Passion* (**Figs 57, 59**). All aspects can be found again not only in Munch's earliest woodcut *Man's Head in Woman's Hair* (**Fig. 60**), but also in subsequent woodcuts such as *Moonlight I* (see **Fig. 109**), *Evening*,



Figure 53 *Man's Head in Woman's Hair*, 1896, woodcut proof, with hand colour additions, 547mm x 380mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00569-05. Photo by Rena Li



Figure 54 (above) Amiens (Jean Baptiste Lefèvre-Corbinière), *True Portrait of the Wandering Jew*, c. 1800 (later impression), woodcut coloured with stencils, 480mm x 305mm, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 5, October 1895. National Art Library, London, RC.W.65, L.261(ii)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Figure 55 (right) François Georgin (Épinal), *Our Lady of the Hermits*, 1824 (later impression), woodcut coloured with stencils, 630mm x 370mm, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 3, April 1895. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(i)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

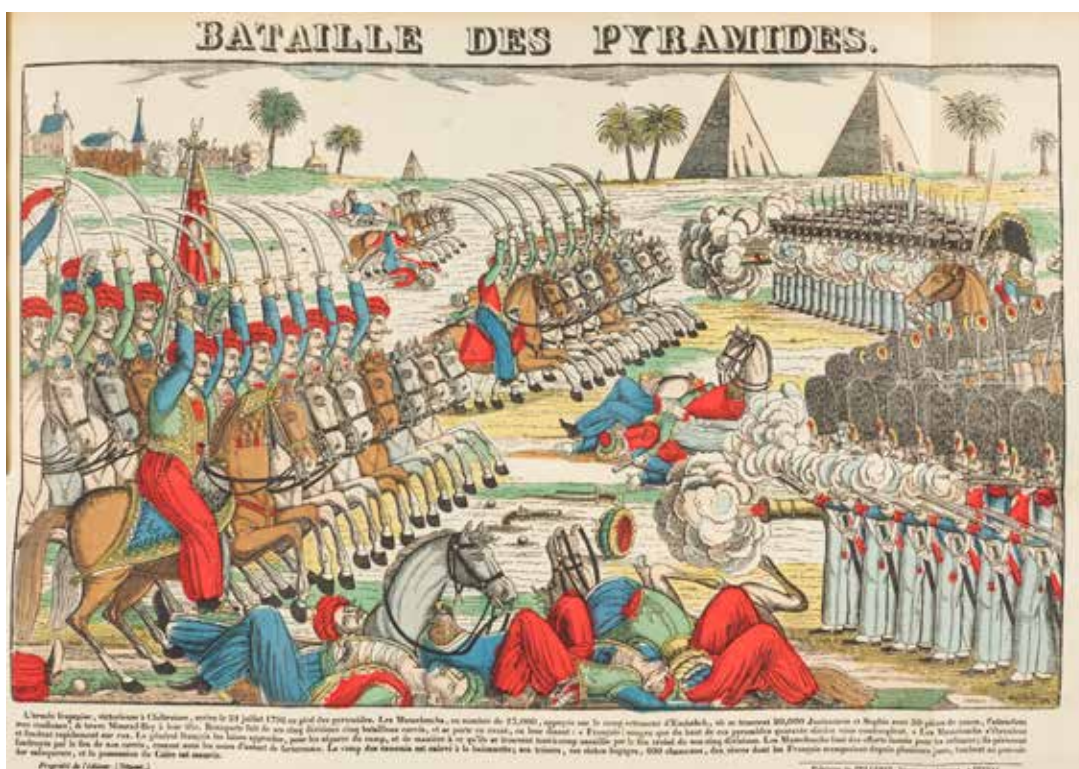


Figure 56 François Georgin (Épinal), *Battle of the Pyramids*, 1830 (later impression), woodcut coloured with stencils, 402mm x 585mm, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 2, January 1895. National Art Library, London, RC.W.64, L.261(i)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

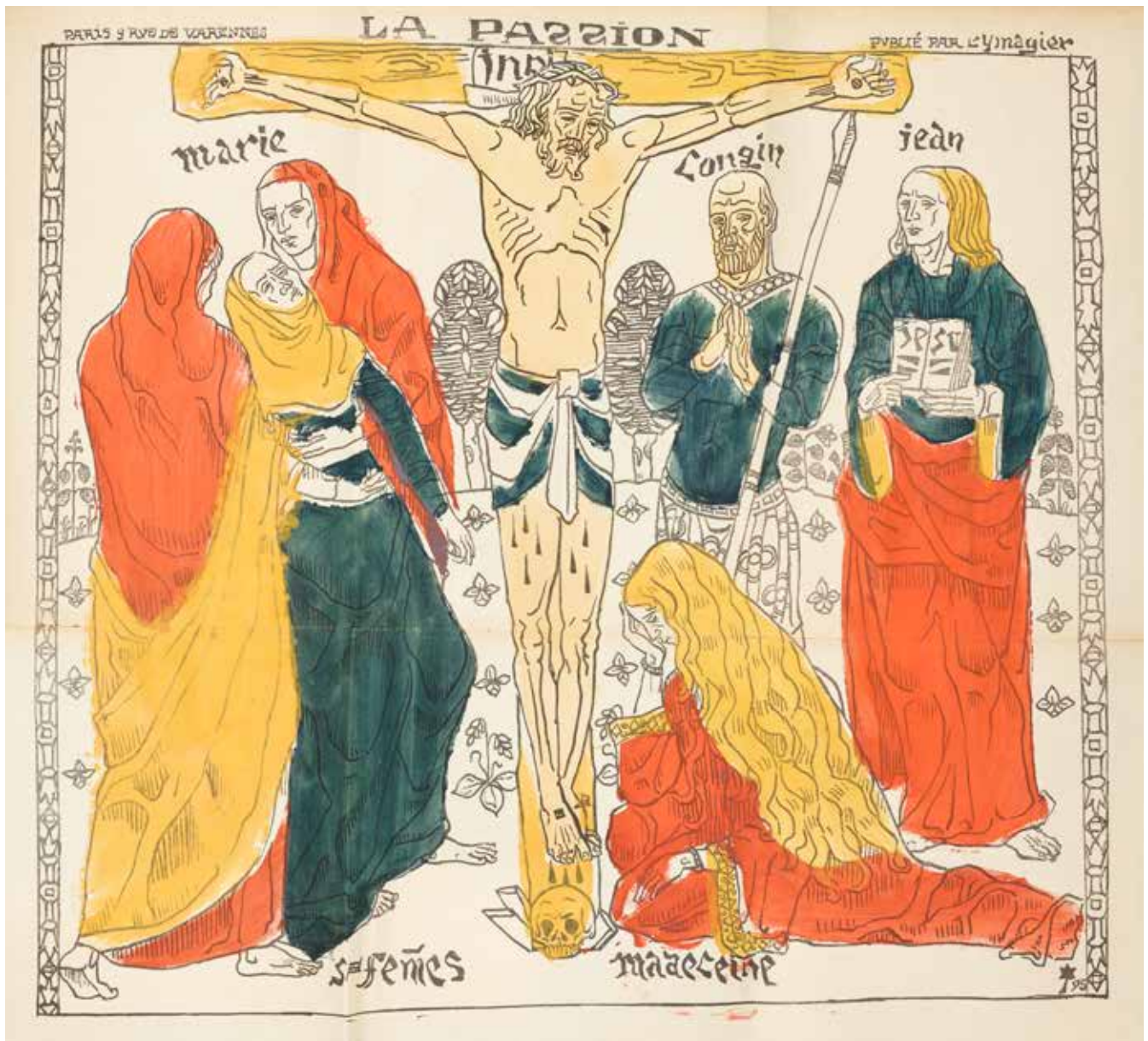


Figure 57 Émile Bernard, *Passion of Christ*, 1896, zincograph with hand colour additions, 455mm x 520mm, in *L'Ymagier*, no. 6, January 1896. National Art Library, London, RC.W.65, L.261(ii)-1984. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 58 Detail of Figure 56



Figure 59 Detail of Figure 57



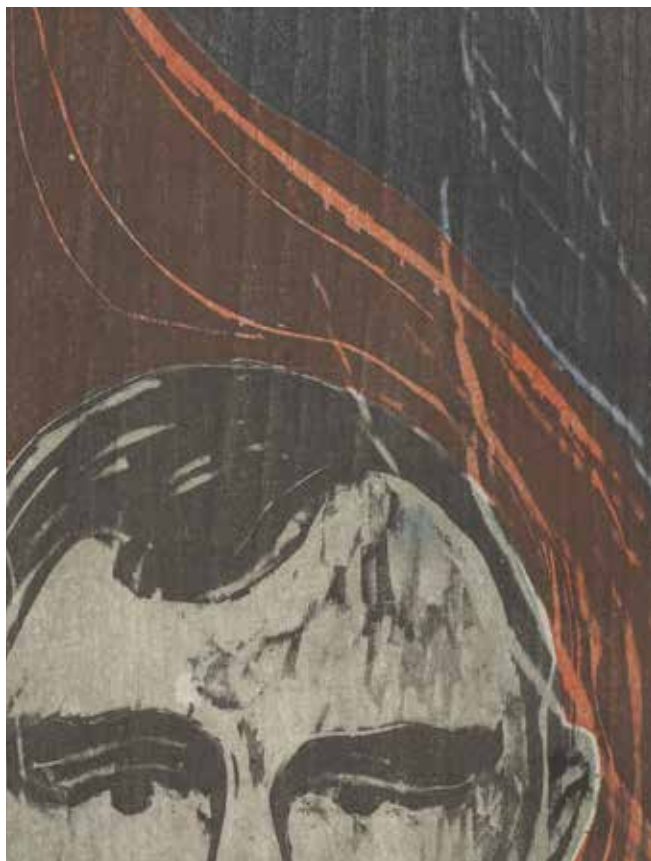


Figure 60 Detail of Figure 41

Melancholy I (see **Fig. 82**), *Summer Night*, *The Voice* and *Towards the Forest I*.³² Here we can observe how Munch turned a traditional visual aesthetic, which originally served purely decorative functions, into something bigger in order to enhance the emotional impact of the image.

When it comes to size, the broadsides in *L'Ymagier* vary, but without exception they are too large for the magazine, which means that they had to be folded several times – sometimes up to four times – to make them fit. While this greatly distressed Jarry, who quite rightly was afraid of damaging the sheets,³³ the reader was given a magical experience. When unfolding the sheet, one literally is overwhelmed by the image. One has to remember that these sheets were originally conceived to be hung on a wall. When viewed closely, the relatively crude details and colours stand out, giving the motifs a sense of urgency, expressiveness and monumentality. Munch would have reacted not much differently from us today, and in my view it is obvious that he tried to recreate the very same effect with his woodcuts. Besides the aforementioned boldness of line, colour and format, one may add that many of Munch's early woodcuts, such as *Man's Head in Woman's Hair* (**Fig. 41**), *Moonlight I* (see **Fig. 109**), *Evening*, *Melancholy I* (see **Fig. 82**), *Summer Night*, *The Voice*, and *Angst*,³⁴ are almost too close and too frontal for comfort, which are exactly the sentiments that one experiences when unfolding the broadsides in *L'Ymagier*.

All the above comparisons between the French publication *L'Ymagier* and Munch's woodcut technique seem to indicate that the magazine was indeed a significant source of inspiration for Munch. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that the magazine was simply a catalyst for the

developments in the Parisian print world around 1895, a platform where Symbolist ideals became embedded in a framework of traditional woodcut aesthetics. We know that Jarry and De Gourmont shared a passion for historical woodcuts, and it would be interesting to shed more light on their sources and to research how far Munch may have had direct access to them as well.

Notes

- 1 For a most complete overview of Munch's prints, see Woll 2001.
- 2 Kuhlemann Falck 2015, 243–51.
- 3 A good summary of the diversity of the woodcut revival can be found, for example, in Parshall and Schoch 2005, 7–10. See also Bass and Field 1984, 14–29.
- 4 Woll 2001, 13.
- 5 Kuhlemann 2002, 41–2.
- 6 Parshall and Schoch 2005, 3–7.
- 7 According to Hans Körner, this started with Johann David Passavant's comprehensive print catalogue and Theodor Weigel and August Zestermann's reproduction projects. Körner 1979, 18–22; Passavant 1860; and Weigel and Zestermann 1866. Into the context of increased publications on early woodcuts falls Champfleury's (pseudonym of Jules-François-Felix Fleury-Husson) illustrated historical account of popular images, which was particularly significant for French avant-garde artists: Champfleury 1869. See Pernoud 1997, 60.
- 8 Körner 1979, 19.
- 9 For information on *L'Ymagier*, see Pernoud 1997, 59–65; Fell 2005, 79–86; Brotchie 2011, 89–92; Parshall and Schoch 2005, 8–10. The possible significance of *L'Ymagier* is observed, for example, in Woll 2011, 17. A complete set of *L'Ymagier* is held in the National Art Library, London.
- 10 For more information on Jarry, see Fell 2005; Brotchie 2011; Bevan 2019.
- 11 Fell 2005, 81.
- 12 *L'Ymagier*, no. 1, October 1894, 5–9.
- 13 Fell 2005, 83.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 85.
- 15 A trait that was later commented upon somewhat amusingly by his contemporaries, and is well reflected in the impressive list of periodicals from Munch's estate. See Gierløff 1953, 217. See also the unpublished diaries of Ludvig Ravensberg, e.g. entries 7 January 1910 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, LR 536), 17 April 1910 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, LR 377), 16 December 1914 (Munchmuseet, Oslo, LR 194). The overwhelming presence of all kinds of printed matter in Munch's home is vividly described in Myre 1946, 7–9. The Munchmuseet library holds more than 150 periodical titles from Munch's estate (with runs of various lengths).
- 16 Langaard and Revold 1961, 25. It is also at Molard's place that Munch most likely encountered Gauguin's woodcuts. See Torjusén 1978, 198; Brotchie 2011, 145.
- 17 For more information on the 'Meier-Graefe portfolio', see Woll 1995, 8–24.
- 18 De Gourmont, for example, recommended the artist Fedor Cohn to Meier-Graefe. See a letter from Meier-Graefe to Harry Graf Kessler of 14 March 1896, cited in Meier-Graefe 2001, 41.
- 19 *L'Ymagier* no. 1, October 1894. The same page features brief advertisements for other important art and culture magazines, such as *Mercure de France*, in which both editors were directly

involved, and *The Yellow Book* (London), *Tweemaandelijks Tijdschrift* (Amsterdam) and *La Société nouvelle* (Brussels).

20 Kuhlemann Falck 2015, 247.

21 *L'Imagier*, no. 2, January 1895, 116–20.

22 Woll 2001, cats 38, 63–4.

23 For example, Woll 2011, 18.

24 When first reproduced, the image was correctly described as a lithograph, see *La Revue Blanche* 9(60), 1 December 1895, 527–8. In the previous issue of 15 November, the co-editor of the magazine, Thadée Natanson, had favourably reviewed Munch's current exhibition in Oslo, see *La Revue Blanche* 9(59), 15 November 1895, 477–8. For further information on *La Revue Blanche*, see also Jennifer Ramkalawon's contribution in this publication, pp. 18–36. In the USA, Vance Thompson published his negative commentary on Munch and, with reference to *La Revue Blanche*, reproduced *The Scream* lithograph and described it wrongly as a woodcut. See Thompson 1896.

25 Woll 2001, cat. 39.

26 For example, *Madonna, Vampire* (all 1895), see *ibid.*, cats 39, 41.

27 *Ibid.*, cat. 38.

28 Félix Vallotton's woodcut *The Swans* (1892) measures 253mm x 327mm and Gauguin's *Noa Noa: Nave Nave Fenua* (1893–4) measures 357mm x 208mm.

29 Woll 2001, cats 90–3.

30 *Ibid.*, cat. 136. From the 38 impressions in the Munch collection, 29 examples measure between 600mm x 450mm and 800mm x 600mm. Whether the remaining impressions were originally printed on smaller sheets or trimmed at a later stage cannot be determined here.

31 Fell 2005, 81.

32 Woll 2001, cats 90–2, 112.

33 Fell 2005, 85.

34 Woll 2001, cats 89–93.

Chapter 4

Sick Girls, Sick Women, Sick Prints

Allison Morehead

To say that Edvard Munch was preoccupied, in his painting, printmaking, drawing and writing, with sickness and with death is perhaps so evident as to be almost banal. Indeed, Munch seems to have dwelt in a 'kingdom' of sickness, to borrow Susan Sontag's 'brief, hectic flourish of metaphor' with which she hoped, at the outset of her essay, *Illness as Metaphor*, to perform an 'exorcism of the seductiveness of metaphorical thinking' about illness.¹ Munch's *Sick Child* makes a brief appearance in that essay (presumably Sontag had one of the painted versions in mind) as an 'explicit' celebration of the tuberculosis sufferer's 'born victimhood', one of the various 19th-century depictions she evokes of an 'emaciated, hollow-eyed, tubercular girl', 'not quite life-loving enough to survive'.²

As he did with love, loss, loneliness, anxiety, jealousy and isolation, experiences that highlight subjects' profound vulnerability, Munch thematised sickness and death as universal and deeply affecting human experiences, often deriving, or at least insisting that he derived, these universalising portrayals from his own personal life. A number of scholars, including Patricia G. Berman, Reinhold Heller, Ingebjørg Ydstie and David Lomas, have delved into how Munch depicted sickness using a kind of 'sick' form, as well as how the artist frequently identified sickness, including mental illness, with his own creative processes.³ As these historians acknowledge, this can be a fraught line of enquiry, negotiating the language with which critics of modernism pathologised artworks and their makers. One of the signature strategies of the Nazi regime, of course, was to denigrate modern art and modern artists by pathologising both, which became at once prelude to and pretext for mass murder.⁴ Berman and Lomas, in particular, have underlined the importance of carefully contextualising the critical responses to Munch's work that used a language of sickness to condemn the art and the artist as pathological, degenerate and insane.⁵

Frequently acknowledged, but much less often probed, is the fact that Munch sought his universalising depictions of sickness and identified his creative powers with sickness in a period in which the lived experiences of sickness were in significant flux and very much dependent, as they still are, on modern constructions of gender, as well as class and race. Munch's life and career spanned the crucial years of the advent of modern medicine in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe, which was fuelled by a host of linked developments such as germ theory, antisepsis, anaesthesia, modern surgery and public health movements.⁶ Equally, if not more significantly, as the son and brother of doctors, friend and favoured artist of numerous medical practitioners, and frequent patient himself, Munch was embedded in and at times had privileged access to the new medical institutions, personnel, technologies and therapies that were rapidly leading, albeit differentially, to increasingly medicalised modern lives.⁷ If, as Munch famously wrote, 'Disease and Insanity and Death were the black Angels that stood by my Cradle following me from birth',⁸ then caregivers, nurses, pharmacists and doctors, using a host of new diagnostic techniques, medical apparatuses and therapies, were often present to try to keep those black angels at bay.

As Munch's frequently cited claim about disease attending his birth suggests, however, the medical frame is



Figure 61 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1885–6, oil on canvas, 1200mm x 1185mm. National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Fine Art Collections, Oslo, NG.M.00839. Photo © Børre Høstland

not often made explicit, in the works themselves, in the artist's writings, in the critical literature or indeed in the art historical literature. In emphasising medical modernity as a context for Munch's work, my intention is not solely to add to our understanding of the artist's depictions of sickness, but above all to consider how Munch's modernist practice offers pathways to thinking and feeling critically about modern medicine. Focusing on a selection of well-known and lesser-known lithographs, some of the most experimental of the artist's career, I question Sontag's implicit claim about the essentially metaphorical quality of Munch's work. Rather, I argue that these lithographs depicting sickness, especially the sickness of girls and women, deployed multiple printmaking techniques related to colour, chance and accident to offer forms of incomprehensibility that trouble medicine's claims to the gendered authority of the clinical

gaze.⁹ In doing so, Munch's 'sick prints' belie stereotypical representations of the sick girl or woman as sign, and hold out the possibility of reclaiming sickness from modern medical authority, even dwelling in sickness, for the sake of a girl or woman-identified self, a possibility famously explored by Virginia Woolf in her 1926 essay *On Being Ill*.¹⁰

❧

The Sick Child, one of Munch's most well-known motifs, exists in numerous painted and printed versions, analyses of which almost always prioritise, encouraged by Munch's writings, the artist's memories of his sister Sophie's suffering and dying of tuberculosis at the age of 15, when Munch himself was 13.¹¹ Drafting a letter to the art historian and long-time Director of the Norwegian National Museum, Jens Thiis, probably in the early 1930s when Thiis was preparing a monograph on the artist, Munch insisted that



Figure 62 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1894, drypoint with roulette, 275mm x 271 mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00007-17. Photo by Ove Kvavik

The Sick Child originated solely in his childhood home, that 'there can be no conceivable chance of any other place having played a part in [its] birth'.¹² Munch, in my view, anxiously overstated his case to Thiis. In other writings, as Gerd Woll has noted, the artist disclosed how important the red-haired model, Betzy Nilsen, had been for the work,¹³ which includes a particularised portrait of its central figure rather than a generalised or caricatural depiction.¹⁴ Munch seems to have met Nilsen and subsequently asked her to pose for him when, in his early twenties, he accompanied his doctor father on a house call to treat Nilsen's brother who had broken his leg. Nilsen, who offered this information late in her life and after Munch's death, recalled that she too had been unwell at the time of the house call, as she had been suffering from rickets.¹⁵ Thus, in addition to seeing the scene of the sick child through the eyes of a family member such as

a grieving brother or an imagined universal viewer, we can also see the work through the eyes of a young man being initiated into the fraternity of medicine by his father. While already considering himself an artist, this young man was also a de facto member of an emerging medical establishment. By attending his father's house calls, he encountered vulnerable people in their domestic spaces to which he would not have had access otherwise, and to which he gained entry primarily for the purposes of observation, diagnosis and treatment, as well as a modicum of preliminary medical training.¹⁶

In *The Sick Child* painting of 1885–6 (**Fig. 61**) and in the first intaglio version of the motif of 1894 (**Fig. 62**), Munch explored the expressive possibilities of the scene through composition and in his use of paint and ink. Arranging the sick child sitting upright in a chair, as his friend, mentor and



Figure 63 (left) Christian Krohg, *Sick Girl*, 1881, oil on wood panel, 1020mm x 580mm. National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Fine Art Collections, Oslo, NG.M.00805. Photo © Jacques Lathion

Figure 64 (above) John Whitehead Walton (attr.), *Anxious Moments: A Sick Child, Its Grieving Parents, a Nursemaid, and a Medical Practitioner*, 1894, oil on canvas, 720mm x 915mm. Wellcome Collection, London, 45028i

rival Christian Krohg (**Fig. 63**) had done, with a thick build-up of paint in some areas and with the vertical and horizontal scratching of the painted surface, echoed in the drypoint, he produced something very different from the period's often-sentimentalising depictions of sick children lying in bed accompanied by family members and medical practitioners (**Fig. 64**). And, as Munch emphasised in his notes to Thiis, referring to the period in art as 'the pillow age', these first versions of *The Sick Child* were also very different from naturalist and symbolist depictions of individual sick girls, including the immediate precedent of Krohg.¹⁷ Especially in the first painting, which he exhibited in 1886 as a breakthrough work, Munch attempted to very literally and in a performative fashion inscribe emotion into the work, the violent scratching and build-up of paint becoming potential signs of deep feeling, even trauma.¹⁸

When Munch returned to the motif in 1896, he made another intaglio version (**Fig. 65**) and a lithograph, both of which radically crop the scene to focus tightly on the head of the child against the pillow.¹⁹ Especially in the lithograph the background becomes highly abstracted, the pillow barely identifiable as such. Without the clues of the earlier composition, such as the bottle or the caregiver bowing her

head, we might not even, without the title to guide us, readily identify the figure as 'sick'. Rather than any particular sick child, sickness itself is asserted as the question, which is to say the subject matter of the work. The child's face, hair, torso and the surface of the print all, therefore, become potential sites for observation and diagnosis, for the reading of signs and symptoms of sickness, indeed for the reading of the print itself.²⁰

This is especially noticeable when looking at multiple impressions of the lithograph, which evidence an often-bewildering combination of techniques such as crayon, tusche and scratching. Some are printed with four or even possibly five stones inked in different colours, and a few include hand-touching, which is sometimes extensive. In the absence of the original stones, which might help decode Munch's procedure, it has proven very difficult for print scholars to fully dissect the techniques and the number of stones used for the colour impressions.²¹ This profusion of sick children and their complexity intensifies observational, diagnostic and connoisseurial impulses, and, as Elizabeth Prelinger has suggested, potentially varies our understanding of the child's sickness and our affective responses from print to print.²² Is *The Sick Child* close to death in pale bluish-yellow cool tones (**Fig. 66**)? Is she livelier in rainbow hues (**Fig. 67**)? Is she feverish in deep pink (**Fig. 68**), and less feverish in lighter orange (**Fig. 69**)? What do we make of yellow gouache added to the hair, or purple crayon? And is blood-red hair an indication that she is coughing up blood, one of the more horrifying symptoms of tuberculosis (**Fig. 70**)? When Munch switches things up, probably redeploying one of the secondary or tertiary colour stones as the keystone to create a more abraded effect, do we see the sick child literally wasting further away? Another way to think about this is that Munch's use of colour to highlight different parts of the print operates similarly to



Figure 65 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1896, colour etching with drypoint, 128mm x 168mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00043-06. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

Figure 66 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour lithograph, 422mm x 570mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-07. Photo by Ove Kvavik





Figure 67 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour lithograph, 413mm x 572mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-03. Photo by Ove Kvavik

Figure 68 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour lithograph, 420mm x 567mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-02. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård





Figure 69 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour lithograph, 432mm x 571mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-06. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

Figure 70 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child II*, 1896, colour lithograph, 415mm x 570mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-17. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård





Figure 71 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour lithograph, 435mm x 634mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-04. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

medical imaging, which is not to say that the image ‘looks like’, for instance, a brain scan, but rather that it functions, visually, analogously to a brain scan, using colour to draw our attention to certain parts of the image, while downplaying others, producing a patterning that invites the viewer to see, to diagnose and to extract meaning from that diagnosis.²³ But, ultimately, in the sheer variety of effects, of colour as well as of lines and other forms, this impulse to know through diagnosis is thwarted, resulting in an unstable sick child whose symptoms are so variable across the prints – and in that variability, aestheticised – as to be impossible to assign to any one disease category.

The often-imagined role of Munch as grieving brother creating *The Sick Child* as an expressive work to externalise his own emotions, and in turn to solicit a comparable or even parallel emotional response from his viewers, is further undercut, at least in the case of the lithographs, by the recollections of the German artist Paul Herrmann (also known by his pseudonym Henri Hérán). Herrmann remembered arriving at the Parisian studio of the printer Auguste Clot, one of the pre-eminent lithographic printers in Paris at the time, and seeing the stones for *The Sick Child* lined up in a row ready for printing:

Munch arrives, stands in front of the row, closes his eyes tightly and directs his finger blindly through the air: ‘Print ... gray, green, blue, brown’. Opens his eyes, says to me: ‘Come, drink a Schnapps’ ... And so the printer printed until Munch returned and gave another blind order: ‘Yellow, pink, red ...’ And so on another couple of times.²⁴

Herrmann’s testimony, reported in the 1934 monograph by Thiis, in which Munch had a hand, undoubtedly celebrates Munch as the heroic instigator of chance effects, a kind of impresario of the studio scene trusting supremely in his artistic instincts and powers. But the story also suggests that Munch was, at least to a certain extent, willing to leave to chance the effects and corresponding affects produced by the various colour combinations of *The Sick Child* lithographs. In other words, it implies not only that he was concerned with the viewer’s replicating or empathetically sharing his own affective response to *The Sick Child*, but also that he was willing to accept that printmaking, sickness and one’s affective responses to sickness are ultimately out of one’s control and perhaps beyond rational knowledge.

How are the observational and diagnostic impulses, and the affective experiences invited by the print, altered when Munch reintroduces the woman with the bowed head, the caregiver, back into the scene in hand-touched versions of the lithograph? In one impression, broad strokes of watercolour create a transparent element that exists in an entirely different formal universe from the sick child, so much so that the caregiver interrupts the viewing process (**Fig. 71**). This is the case especially in comparison with another hand-touched impression in which the caregiver’s head is less transparent and elements of watercolour across the torso of the sick child unify the two figures (**Fig. 72**). In the former impression, however, the caregiver exists as a hovering, but ineffectual presence, less a woman attending the bedside or a figure with whom the viewer might identify,



Figure 72 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child I*, 1896, colour lithograph, 432mm x 573mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00203-05. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

and more a spectral intruder into our field of vision, a further block on efforts to know the work and the sickness it supposedly represents.

In 1896, the same year that Munch began printing his *Sick Child* lithographs, he printed another lithograph in Clot's Parisian studio, rarely exhibited and reproduced, that similarly frustrates a diagnostic gaze.²⁵ *Women in the Hospital* depicts at its centre a clothed woman being examined and perhaps comforted by a faceless doctor, the same doctor father figure who appears in a number of Munch's sickroom images, and into whose beard the woman's hand seems to disappear (**Fig. 73**). Two other men in the lower left-hand corner of the print seem to participate in or observe the examination, while a fourth man examines one of the four partially dressed women of the background, who display spots that probably signify the chancres or pustules of syphilis. These signs of syphilis combined with their state of undress identify the women in the background as both sex workers and mentally ill, an identity that the still-clothed woman of the print might as yet only partially occupy.²⁶

Particularly striking is the print's prominent lithographic error, most evident across the central woman's dress, which is likely to have occurred with the application of diluted ink during the difficult to manage *lavis* process.²⁷ The apparent error became fixed to the lithographic stone, creating the same striated patterning in all eight known impressions of

the print. Munch seems to have considered correcting the error, judging by a hand-touched trial version of the lithograph (**Fig. 74**), but it is consistent in the seven other known impressions.²⁸ Regardless of Munch's intent or to what extent he may have judged the print completed or a success, this seeming error, as I have argued elsewhere, nevertheless creates meaning in the work, effectively dissolving the central figure in ways that, given that modern medicine works with a construct of illness as biological error,²⁹ identify her as a site of disease. But the lithographic error at the very centre of the print also signifies this figure as a problematic object of the clinical gaze, especially since her dissolution extends to some of the members of the expert audience surrounding her, including the doctor performing the examination. Without apparent eyes, and with her hand seemingly stuffed into his mouth, the doctor's 'loquacious gaze', to use Michel Foucault's term for one of the mechanisms by which clinical expertise is asserted, is both blinded and silenced.³⁰ In this highly unusual work, Munch renders the medical frame especially explicit, but largely to throw into question modern medicine's claims to knowledge about sickness, and in particular the sickness of women. At the same time that the clothed woman is dissolving from sickness, error as sickness takes over the work, encouraging the viewer to linger over the contours of her high-necked, puffy-sleeved dress, but with a gaze more perplexed than



Figure 73 Edvard Munch, *Women in the Hospital*, 1896, lithograph, 330mm x 480mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00200-01. Photo by Ove Kvavik

Figure 74 Edvard Munch, *Women in the Hospital*, 1896, lithograph with hand colour additions, 340mm x 490mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00200-06. Photo by Ove Kvavik



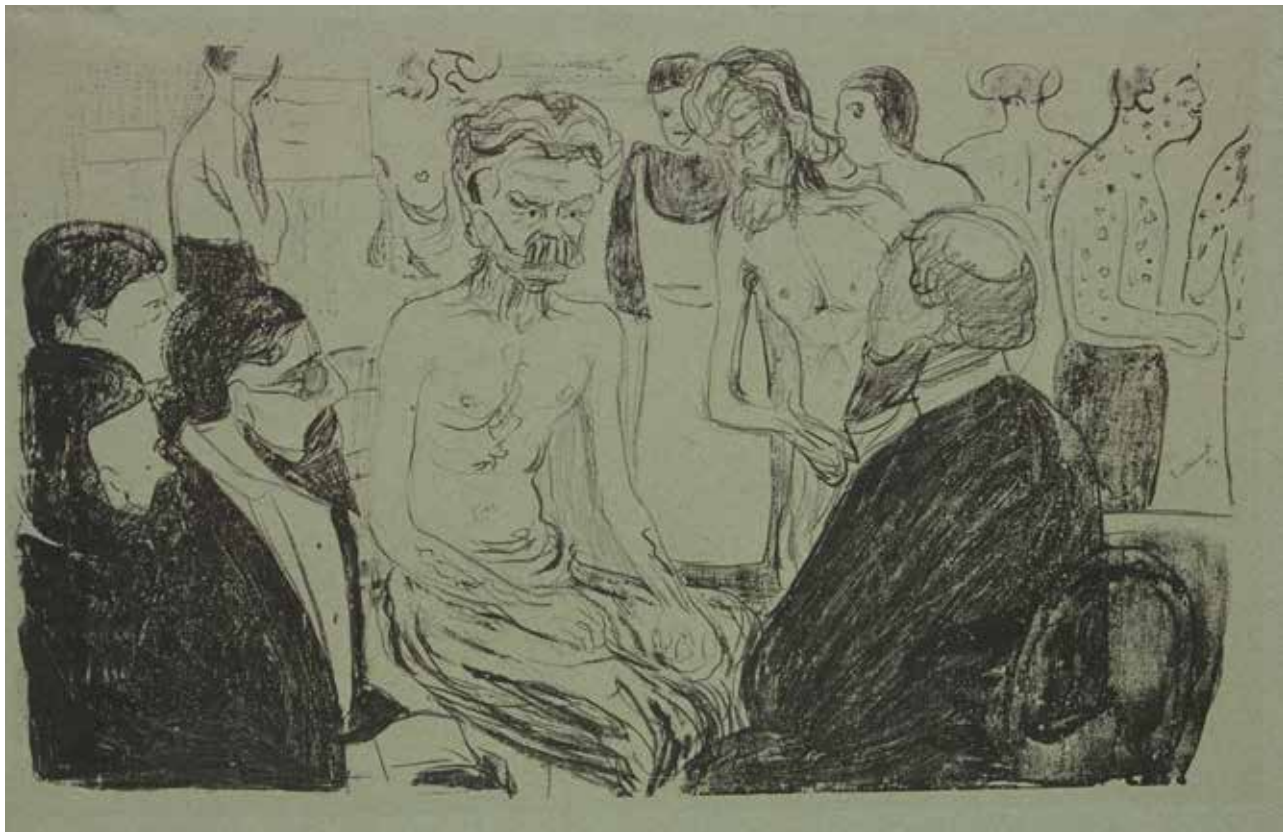


Figure 75 Edvard Munch, *In the Hospital*, 1896, lithograph, 329mm x 531mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00199-05

dominating. Frustrating the viewer's gaze, the woman is simultaneously identifiable as sick and refuses the usual identifications of sickness. In other words, in sickness she is undoubtedly subject to a clinical gaze but gains agency by seeming to disrupt the usual mechanics of that gaze.

A related lithograph from 1896, also printed at Clot's, suggests some of the gendered mechanisms of the clinical gaze by offering an utterly different relationship between a male-identified patient and the similarly identified doctors (**Fig. 75**). Less a depiction of clinical observation, and more of confrontation, the putative patient, sometimes identified as a portrait of the Swedish playwright, painter and photographer August Strindberg, scrutinises the bearded doctor on the right, while a doppelgänger patient leans over to look at both the patient and at the stiff group of doctors on the left, a veritable 'army of the upright' as Woolf termed the non-sick.³¹ Here, to a much greater extent, the clinical gaze is shared and returned, the male patient, despite his state of undress, existing on a much more equal, even superior footing to the expert clinicians. The lithograph also includes one of Munch's characteristic avatars of himself among the doctors on the left, implicating him in the clinical scene. The inclusion suggests that Munch's early initiation into the fraternity of medicine through his doctor father constitutes the very foundation of an emerging critique of the power and fallibility of the clinical gaze.

Woll noted the formal similarity between the central figure of *Women in the Hospital* and the mother figure of *Inheritance*, a painting that Munch referred to as 'my syphilis art', as if, as Lomas pointed out, the artist had created an entire genre of 'sick art' (**Fig. 76**).³² Originally titled *The Mother*, and clearly echoing religious iconography of the

Virgin and Child, the painting was reviewed by one critic in 1906 as a 'specialist painting ... of the medical school amphitheatre'.³³ Like *The Sick Child*, the motif seems to have been rooted in a medical encounter, which Munch claimed took place at a hospital for venereal diseases, likely the Hôpital Saint-Louis in Paris, where he recalled seeing a 'Wife ... who had just now been told – that her Child had been doomed from Birth'.³⁴ A friend confirmed the encounter, adding that Munch gained access to the hospital because he knew a doctor, again reminding us of the extent to which Munch enjoyed privileged access to medical institutions.³⁵

At some point, probably around 1916, Munch returned to the motif of a mother who has given birth to a syphilitic child, producing a lithograph and a number of drawings in which he significantly altered the mother's gesture.³⁶ In the painting the mother's hands go nowhere near her child, but in the lithograph her right hand cradles the child's head while the left lifts up the sheet to either veil or unveil the baby, as if presenting or having just presented the infant for examination (**Fig. 77**). The gesture is especially notable in a drawing on vellum paper, drawn on one side and seemingly traced on the other, which may link it to the process of transferring the drawing to the lithographic stone (**Fig. 78**).³⁷ Most provocative about this particular drawing is that the child's face, which stares out of all other versions of the motif, confronting and implicating the viewer directly, is emphatically cancelled out.

Another drawing, made on the back of one of Munch's aquatints, suggests possible readings for the lithograph, which are pertinent for this discussion of a medical frame, medical knowledge, looking, gender and meaning (**Fig. 79**).³⁸



Figure 76 Edvard Munch, *Inheritance*, 1897–9, oil on canvas, 1415mm x 1205mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.M.00011. Photo by Ove Kvavik



Figure 77 (above left) Edvard Munch, *Inheritance*, c. 1916, lithograph, 442mm x 315mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00545-04. Photo by Rena Li

Figure 78 (above right) Edvard Munch, *Inheritance*, c. 1897 or c. 1916?, black crayon on transfer paper (?), 512mm x 390mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.T.02267

Figure 79 (left) Edvard Munch, *Inheritance*, c. 1916, brush and wash with black crayon, 446mm x 308mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.T.02852. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

A male, moustachioed figure, all upright and puffed out chest, partially enters the scene from the right, the doctor, perhaps, come to inspect the child, whom the mother obligingly unwraps for examination. This figure has the quality of an interruption, not unlike the bowed head of the caregiver in the hand-touched versions of *The Sick Child* lithograph and not unlike the disturbing effect of the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot entering the photographic frame, gripping his patient in order to steady her for the supposedly objective lens of the camera (**Fig. 80**).³⁹ But unlike Charcot, who peers at us out of the photograph and who violently asserts his control of the woman's body, the eyes of the man in Munch's drawing are nearly or fully shaded with heavy lids. And despite his stature, he is depicted sketchily, creepily yet comically unsubstantial, especially in comparison to the mother figure, whose dress is rendered in opaque black ink. The mother looks down, and maybe slightly away, as if to avoid the medical gaze and perhaps also the bad news she already knows. Unveiling is a common and highly gendered trope of understanding, knowledge and truth,⁴⁰ but in this drawing and indeed in the lithograph dispensing entirely with the doctor, Munch undermines the medical professional's purchase on the revealed objects of knowledge, and offers an object of knowledge to us, thus confronting the viewer with – and implicating the male viewer in – the cycle in which wives unknowingly conceive children with their infected husbands, learning the truth of this inheritance only at the moment of birth preceding almost certain death.

✂

Since the early 1980s, the word 'sick' has been used as a slang term to mean something 'excellent' or 'impressive', often with connotations of risk-taking and technical ability, as attested by its usage in skating and snowboarding subcultures.⁴¹ Slang is frequently structured by inversion, and I have tried to keep this in mind when writing of 'sick prints'. For it seems to me that Munch's experimental print techniques, and in particular his works depicting sick girls and women, responded *avant la lettre* to Woolf's calls for a 'new language', 'more primitive, more sensual, more obscene', that could represent the experiences of being ill.⁴² This is not to imply that Munch was a feminist,⁴³ but rather that his works thematising the sickness of girls and women strove for a 'new formal language' that in the end was both affecting and critical. This search for new form appears to have been facilitated by Munch's position of privilege as a de facto member of the male medical establishment, resulting in works that express and invite a kind of felt insight that one's experience of illness and one's experience in a medical institution might depend on one's gender identification.

Woolf's essay *On Being Ill* foregrounds the experiential possibilities of illness above all for women, for whom 'being ill' might be reclaimed as an 'art', a site of power where the 'hierarchy of passions' can be upended and the institutional apparatus of reading might be short-circuited to the benefit of the disabled woman.⁴⁴ 'Incomprehensibility has an enormous power over us in illness', Woolf wrote, 'more legitimately perhaps than the upright will allow ... in illness, with the police off duty, we creep beneath some obscure poem by Mallarmé or Donne ... Illness, in its kingly



Figure 80 Anonymous, Jean-Martin Charcot with Female Patient Suffering from Locomotive Ataxia, c. 1885, photograph. Hôpital Saint-Louis Archives, Paris

sublimity ... leaves nothing but Shakespeare and oneself'.⁴⁵ Woolf offers a different but comparable view to Sontag's, in suggesting that the issue is not metaphor per se, but rather the power of interpretation that one claims for oneself. It is tempting to imagine the sick child of the lithographs as in a sickroom of her own, which is perhaps why the tight cropping of the composition is so effective and the reintroduction of the head of the caregiver so jarring. The possibility is even more tempting when we recognise that Woolf's text is also a response to her mother's meditation and manual on caregiving, *Notes from Sick Rooms*, published in 1883. Julia Stephen's book, based on a near lifetime of caring for the sick, implies the sickroom as a space of hypothetical power for the Victorian woman caregiver, in which she takes charge of an invalid, not infrequently an adult male. Woolf and Munch take things a step further, exorcising the caregiver to raise the possibility of woman's sickness as a necessary creative response to a world that makes her ill.

Munch's 'sick prints' of sick girls and sick women, above all *The Sick Child*, do not solely or even primarily enact the aestheticised and fetishised wasting woman and child. In addition, or instead, they deploy the possibilities of lithography to offer, dwell in and even celebrate incomprehensibility as a latent site of resistance to and critique of Woolf's 'army of the upright'. This is, of course, something of a romanticised, even hopeful reading, one that depends, as Woolf and Munch often did, on diminishing or even editing out – itself an act of critique – the incidental details of medicine (of its institutions, technologies and accoutrements) in a bid to reclaim sickness for a self.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 Sontag 1990, 3, 91.
- 2 Sontag 1990, 26. That Munch's *Sick Child* does not entirely fit with the 'codes of consumption' as alluded to by Sontag, is suggested by Sharon Hirsh's relative silence on the work, see Hirsh 2004, 144–65. On Sontag's mention of Munch, see also Bondevik and Stene-Johansen 2011, 147.
- 3 Berman 1993; Berman 1994; Heller 1998; Heller 2006; Ydstie 2011; Morehead 2014; Lomas 2015; Morehead 2017a, 137–71.
- 4 Most recently, see Peters 2014; Lüttichau 2014.
- 5 Berman 1993; Berman 1994; Lomas 2015, 216.
- 6 The history of medicine is a vast field. For starting points, see Porter 1997; Duffin 1999.
- 7 The concept of the 'medicalisation of life' stems from the work of Ivan Illich. See Illich 1976.
- 8 Munchmuseet, Oslo, T 2759, 53r–54r, undated sketchbook (trans. by F.M. Nichols, slightly altered).
- 9 Foucault 1973, 107–23.
- 10 Woolf 1926. I align my argument here with the more nuanced feminist art historical approaches to Munch's work inaugurated by Berman and Van Nimmen 1997.
- 11 Ustvedt 2009, 126. The literature on *The Sick Child*, in particular the painted versions and above all the first version of 1885–6, is extensive. The most detailed studies include: Schneede 1984; Plahter 1992; Schneede 2002; Clarke 2006; Bjerke 2006; Ustvedt and Aslakby 2009. The work is placed into a larger context of Nordic depictions of sick girls in Bøgh Jensen 2021.
- 12 Cited in English translation in Stang 1979, 60. Original Munchmuseet, Oslo, N 45, dated 1931–4. Draft letter to Jens Thiis.
- 13 Munchmuseet, Oslo, N 70, cited in Woll 2008, 86.
- 14 The portrait-like quality of the work can be gauged in comparison with other depictions of Nilsen: two paintings reproduced in Woll 2009, vol. 1, 148, cat. 131; 157, cat. 144; and a pastel tentatively dated 1896 (Hamburger Kunsthalle). Nilsen later worked for the Munch family as a maid, and also posed, a few years later, for the painting *Spring*, which reworked the motif of the sick child. See Woll 2009, vol. 1, 178, cat. 173.
- 15 Dahl, O. 1950. 'Syk pike har overlevd sin mester', *Dagbladet*, 30 December, as summarised in Woll 2008, 103 n. 2. Correspondence from the early 1940s between Munch and Betzy Nilsen, and between Munch and his sister Inger Munch, testifies to the artist's ongoing concern for Nilsen. In a letter from this time asking for help, Nilsen signed her name followed by 'syk pike', undoubtedly appealing to Munch's memories of working on a motif that he ranked among his most important. He sent her money, which she gratefully acknowledged in a subsequent letter.
- 16 It was common practice for sons to accompany their doctor fathers on house calls, implicitly or explicitly with the expectation that the son would follow in the father's footsteps. For a first-person account of this practice, see Thomas 1983.
- 17 'pudetiden'. See Munch's notes and draft letters to Jens Thiis, dated 1931–4, all Munchmuseet, Oslo, N 37, N 45, N 3110, N 3120. Munch directly compared his *Sick Child* to Krohg's.
- 18 Heller 1984, 34–5.
- 19 For the second intaglio print, see Woll 2012, 86–7, cat. 59.
- 20 This understanding of Munch's prints as inviting diagnostic observation and diagnosis as related to art historical analysis is indebted to Ginzburg 1980.
- 21 Woll 2012, 101–5, cats 72–3. Gerd Woll has identified six stones, with up to five used for a single impression. Although Woll notes that it is impossible to be certain given the absence of the stones, she argues that all the impressions of *The Sick Child* were probably made in Auguste Clot's studio between 1896 and 1898.
- 22 Prelinger 1996, 123–4; Prelinger 2006, 60.
- 23 I am indebted to Sabine Wieber for this observation. On modernism and diagnosis, see Love and Mendelman 2021.
- 24 Büttner 1934, 92 (my translation). Cited in French translation in Woll 1991, 253, and in a slightly different English translation in Prelinger 1996, 122. On Clot and lithography in Paris in the 1890s, see Gilmour 1988, 129–82.
- 25 For an expanded version of the argument that follows, see Morehead 2014.
- 26 Kromm 2002, 74–5, 83; Andrews 2007. Munch depicted sex workers in a similarly caricatural way in paintings such as *Rose and Amélie* (1893, Munchmuseet, Oslo) and *Christmas in a Brothel* (1903–4, Munchmuseet, Oslo). See Woll 2009, vol. 1, 293, cat. 313; and vol. 2, 601, cat. 575.
- 27 I am indebted to conversations with Gerd Woll, Magne Bruteig and Ute Kuhlemann Falck on the technical aspects of this lithograph.
- 28 The hand-touched version of the print entered the collection of the Munchmuseet only recently. It is printed on much heavier paper than the other impressions, and the verso includes what appears to be a trial proof of René Georges Hermann-Paul's *Typists* (1896), which was printed in Clot's studio as part of Ambroise Vollard's first *Album des Peintres Graveurs*. Vollard's portfolio also included Munch's lithograph *Angst* (1896). See Woll 2012, 90–1, cat. 63.
- 29 Foucault 1991, 21–2; Canguilhem 1991, 181–6.
- 30 Foucault 1973, xi.
- 31 Woolf 1926, 16.
- 32 Woll 2012, 100, cat. 71. Munch refers to *Inheritance* as 'Mein Syphiliskunst' in an undated letter to Max Linde, which must have been written before 25 March 1903, published in Lindtke 1973, 23. See also Lomas 2015, 217. There is also a second version of the *Inheritance* painting. See Woll 2009, vol. 2, 672, cat. 665.
- 33 Ritter 1906, 98.
- 34 Sketchbook, dated 1908, Munchmuseet, Oslo, T 2800, 35 (trans. by F.M. Nichols, slightly altered).
- 35 Letter from Alfred Hauge to 'Erik' (Thorvald Erichsen?), undated (c. November 1896), Munchmuseet, Oslo. See Woll 1991, 259; Ydstie 2011, 203. I thank Gerd Woll for directing me to Hauge's letters. Ingebørg Ydstie offers a thorough and astute analysis of the *Inheritance* motif. Incidentally, the Hôpital Saint-Louis is the same

hospital at which Strindberg spent a few weeks in early 1895, receiving treatment for a skin ailment on his hands that he felt obliged to publicly deny, in an interview with a French daily newspaper, was caused by syphilis.

36 The drawings are usually dated to around 1897, coinciding with the first painted version of *Inheritance*, but given that the gesture is closer to that in the lithograph, I suggest here they might be dated later.

37 Woll 2012, 383, cat. 603, does not indicate that the lithograph was done using transfer paper, but Woll and I have discussed the likelihood that transfer paper was used (as it was for *The Sick Child* lithographs).

38 The drawing appears on the back of an impression of *Standing Nude* (1896), Woll 2012, 76–7, cat. 46. The plate mark is particularly discernible above the woman's left shoulder.

39 For an astute reading of this photograph, see Hunter 2016, 212–13.

40 Broude 2005, 219.

41 'sick, adj. and n. (draft additions August 2004)', *OED Online*, March 2020, Oxford University Press, www.oed.com (accessed 28 April 2020)

42 Woolf 1926, 7.

43 See Owesen 2013, 296–305.

44 Woolf 1926, 7. See also O'Hara 2015, 60–1.

45 Woolf 1926, 21, 23.

Chapter 5

There and Not-there: Edvard Munch's Photographic Interruptions

Patricia G. Berman

Edvard Munch was a prolific self-portraitist in all media, picturing himself throughout his career in a procession of often theatrical self-stagings in paint, graphic media, drawings and texts.¹ He also took photographs of himself that, although small and private, are as experimental as his work in other media. One photograph, taken in Munch's studio in 1930, is an extraordinary document of performance, of interrupted time and vision, both his and ours (**Fig. 81**). His posture, with his chin resting on his hand, brings to mind his many variations of the motif *Melancholy* (**Fig. 82**), as though the artist embodied or re-enacted his own earlier pictorial invention. The wicker chair that supports his arm is of the type that he had represented on a number of occasions, including his *Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu* (**Fig. 83**). Understanding that objects have biographies and carry memories, the wicker chair is itself a discursive element, perhaps serving, like the artist's posture, to fold time in on itself.²

Like all of Munch's own photographs, this was never exhibited, meaning that it can be understood as the private work of an amateur – that is to say, an untrained and perhaps recreational – photographer.³ Here I use the word 'recreational' in two ways. The first we associate with leisure time, and within that leisure, to recreate means to refresh the body or spirit, to seek 'mental or spiritual consolation'.⁴ The second way I wish to define recreation is re-creation, which is to say, to conjure and revisit, to make something from the past, present. Both forms of recreation produce interruptions in time and place. Munch played a provocative game of sight and recognition in his private photographic practice, a kind of recreation at various moments of his career, and at times a re-creation of moments and motifs past.

Munch's photographs cover two periods, from 1902 to around 1910 and from 1927 to around 1932. His was by no means a large practice, as he left behind only 261 contact prints of 161 motifs and 30 negatives, but close scrutiny reveals that his subversive activity in painting and printmaking was shared by his tiny black and white copy prints. Munch explored the dynamics of interruptions and occlusions in his photography, strategies already familiar to him from his exploration in other media. In the year 1930, however, the interruptions occurred in the artist's own body.

Interrupted vision; subjective sight

In the photograph from 1930, the artist moved his hand and head during the exposure time, rendering him transparent, even ghostlike. Through his flickering image, we see a painting, divided vertically at its centre. Munch's ghostly eye overlaps the edge of this painting. In the upper register, the figure of a man lies in bed, his head resting against a pillow with one hand raised to his face. Before him hovers a large skull that is painted a deep blue colour and worked in layers to appear three-dimensional. Surrounding the leering skull are pale blue and yellow areolae through which lines – signifying wrinkles in the bedcover – intrude (**Fig. 84**). Below is a configuration of concentric circles painted in spectral colours at the centre of which is a soft unformed mass.

This painting was both a medical illustration and a pictorial invention. It was one of about three dozen renderings that Munch made in a variety of media in the

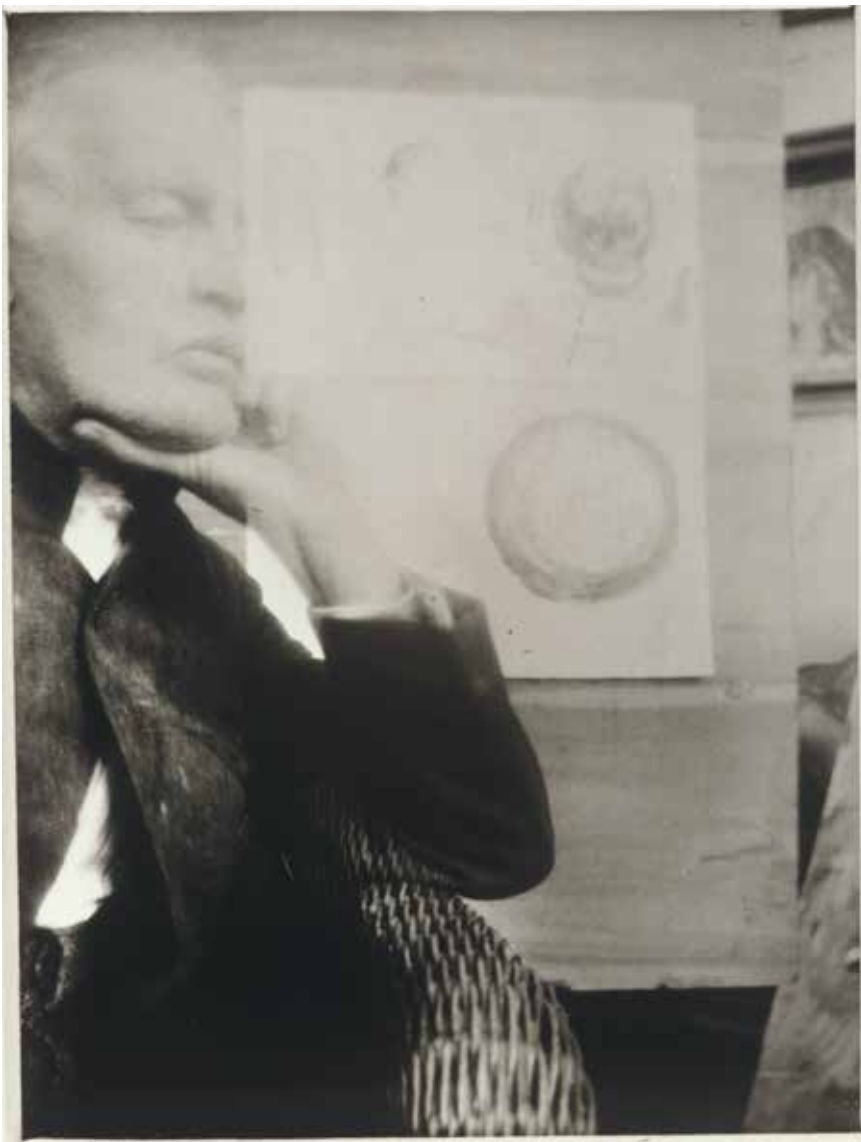


Figure 81 Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait with Eye Disease*, 1930 (earlier F126: the original photograph has disappeared). Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.B.03255



Figure 82 Edvard Munch, *Evening. Melancholy I*, 1896, colour woodcut with gouges, chisel and fretsaw, 411mm x 455mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00571-17. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård



Figure 83 Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu*, 1919, oil on canvas, 1500mm x 1310mm. National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Fine Art Collections, Oslo, NG.M.01867. Gift from Charlotte and Christian Mustad 1937. Photo: Nasjonalmuseet/Børre Høstland

summer of 1930 when a blood vessel burst in his right eye, temporarily and terrifyingly nearly blinding him and forcing him to rely on the weaker left eye, damaged, it seems, in a fist fight years earlier.⁵ Ordered to rest, but both fearful of and fascinated by his ailment, Munch set about drawing and painting what he saw from inside his head, chronicling methodically the interrupted field of his vision. Like the figure he represented in bed, he closed his left eye and for several months he painted and drew the scotoma, or blind spot, occluding the visual field in his right eye, associating the forms that he saw on the interior with symbolic imagery, including the skull. Munch wrote on 2 June 1930:

A large dark bird moved slowly in front of me – with dark brown feathers – a vivid blue hue emanated from it that went over to green and then to a lovely radiant yellow ring – It moved about as I crossed the room – and everything it touched with its colours moved – Serpents crawled – serpents in the most magnificent colours moved and twisted ...⁶

As noted in detail by art historian Ingebjørg Ydstie, Munch's dark bird in June dissolved into a swarm of crows by September, all chronicled by the artist in large-scale paintings in watercolour and crayon, in oil paint, and in notes. Munch's written descriptions alternately provided scientific data – 'The black object which seems to spring from the iris can be a group of black particles, which take ten minutes to disappear'⁷ – and what Dario Gamboni has

termed 'potential images': the artist's imaginative association of known objects transformed the suggestive forms shadowing his vision into a bird, a skull, serpents and other motifs.⁸

Munch's recording and interpretation of his potential retinal images provide a radical investigation of different registers of embodiment. Some paintings border on floating abstraction (**Fig. 85**), in which the artist fixated on the occlusions and their spectral properties in undefined space, testing their capacity for transformation by looking into both natural and artificial light.⁹ Some, as Ydstie notes, are accompanied by inscriptions that estimate the apparent distance between the optical phantasm and a measurable space, the rational data of empirical science. Others spatialise the floating forms by juxtaposing them against a room or other background, as in the one appearing in the photograph. These suggest that the artist viewed himself in a mirror as he recorded the images produced within his damaged vision. Covering one eye as though to bring the blue skull into focus, the artist uses his touch to activate his vision. The hand that enables sight is one form of embodiment rendered in the painting. Another is the potential image itself, which as Philippe Lanthomy notes, is the eye that sees itself, or a seeing body that is dually present in the production of the image via the blind spot and in the act of perceiving it.¹⁰ In turning interrupted sight into visionary images, Munch experienced



Figure 84 Edvard Munch, *The Artist with a Skull; Study of his Afflicted Eye*, 1930, watercolour and bodycolour with crayon, 654mm x 503mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.T.02157. Photo by Tone Margrethe Gauden



Figure 85 Edvard Munch, *The Artist's Afflicted Eye*, optical illusion, 1930, watercolour and bodycolour over graphite, 469mm x 498mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.T.02156. Photo by Tone Margrethe Gauden

Figure 86 Ernst Mach, *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1886), p. 13 or 14, wood engraving. Harvard University Libraries: Call number: Phil 5635.4. Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College



his eye to be both a receptor and a projector, seeing the world and generating its own phenomena.

The artist's exploration of vision as a motif had, lifelong, been a significant component of his work. The ruptures in the surface of his painting *The Sick Child* (see **Fig. 61**), which seem to signify the act of seeing as though through tears, and which disclose the motions of the hand scraping and stabbing his paint, emphasise the artist's body at work.¹¹ As attested by Munch, the painting was his attempt to re-create or call forth a memory of his sister Sophie's death in 1877 at age 15, using living models to stage his recalled image. By digging into the painted surface, repeatedly repainting and then again scoring, pushing the wet paint into little mounds, cutting clefts in the surface, and then working the whole with vertical lines of green paint, the artist both occluded the bodies represented in paint and brought forth their sickness and exhaustion as paint. The body's corporal presence, what Maurice Merleau-Ponty later identified as 'embodied vision', registers the body as it locates what is outside the body.¹²

An early theorist of this kind of seeing was the Austrian physicist Ernst Mach, whose 'empirical' drawing, published in the mid-1880s, rendered his body from the perspective of his left eye, looking past the orbital cavity to map the framing features of his face and the elongated view of his body as it seemingly rushed into the background (**Fig. 86**).¹³ He proposed that perception is an act of embodiment and that seeing is in the first instance a bodily phenomenon.¹⁴



Figure 87 Edvard Munch, *Rue de Rivoli*, 1891, oil on canvas, 810mm x 651mm. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Rudolf Serkin, 1963.153. Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College

Munch's painting, *Rue de Rivoli* (**Fig. 87**), with its skewed and rushing perspective, suggests this exploration of what Mach termed 'subjectivism', a reconciliation of physics and biology as implicated in the embodied act of sight.¹⁵ Mach contributed to a larger scientific and philosophical problem of communicating subjective experience, an arena in which Munch's work also circulated.¹⁶ Munch's exploration of sight that is entangled with the viewing body and its larger sensorium, as Ydstie notes, should be understood as an aspect of *The Scream* (1893; see **Fig. 51**), among other works.¹⁷ The artist's writings include speculations about embodied vision, interrupted or inflected by the larger sensorium, and therefore of necessity transformed optically:

What would they say if a
hapless old painter wanted to paint
a bunch of geese, and they suddenly start yelling
how he's getting it all wrong...
Or if a painter, excited at having found a
charming red house sitting in the middle of a field and,
while painting it, the house begins to yell at him
through its doorway

In this case, auditory sensations transmute vision. In another, alcohol causes a new perception:

When one is out drinking one sees
differently, the lines often dissolve
everything seems more chaotic
It is well-known that one's
vision can actually be distorted
But then one must
obviously also paint
the lines distorted.
If one sees double one must paint
two noses.¹⁸

Methodically observing his eye malfunction so cruelly from the inside of vision, the artist, aged 66, both activated his ongoing analytic and speculative work and literally held up a new lens on the world.

Photographic interruptions

Around 1930, Munch created a large number of photographic self-portraits, sometimes posing as if dissolving into his own work. Among the most poignant of them is the



Figure 88 Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait at Ekely*, 1930, gelatine developing paper, 108mm x 81mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00118-01

one in which his damaged left eye overlaps and becomes coextensive with the figure holding his eye (**Fig. 81**). The artist's body is both there and not-there in its blurred variability, more clearly seen as a painted figure (assuming that the man in the bed is a self-portrait sketch) that was probably registered as though observed in a mirror. The artist's body is also present in the scotoma, the very thing that interrupted his ability to see, represented twice, as a skull and an orb. When Munch posed himself before his painting of images in and projected by the 'sick eye', he created manifold layers of being and sight. With the artist's body pictured from inside the eye, in a mirror, and in the emulsion as a transparency, the artist's photograph provides an exceptional register of space and perception. Other images taken around that time likewise show the artist staged in his studio at Ekely, echoing the posture of *Melancholy* (**Fig. 82**) and otherwise seated before and melting into his works (**Fig. 88**).

A few of Munch's photographs from 1930 were inscribed in the artist's hand to have been taken during or after the 'eye disease' (**Fig. 89**). These belong to a sequence of self-images that the artist took outdoors using handheld cameras. Turning the palm-sized camera back on himself, the artist produced what art historian Clément Chéroux claims to be among the first 'selfies' taken by an artist.¹⁹ In some of the photographs, his extended arm can be discerned by the bunched-up shoulder of his jacket. Tightly framed, and probably using one or two mirrors to control the compositions, which are consistent in their ratio of figure to background, the artist posed outside of his home and studio.



Figure 89 Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait in the Studio at Ekely*, 1930, silver gelatine, developing paper, 101mm x 76mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00122-01

He largely chose angles that emphasised his prominent chin, stretching his neck slightly to firm the aging skin, and he experimented with the appearance of a blank sky versus the diagonal lines of the enframing architecture.

Photographic self-portraiture was, of course, as old as the medium of photography. Hippolyte Bayard's *Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man* (**Fig. 90**), an impossible tableau of the deceased photographer, is considered the first self-image staged for the camera.²⁰ A daguerreotype produced by the American Robert Cornelius is often cited as the first close-up self-image that bears the formal characteristics of a contemporary smartphone 'selfie'.²¹ By the 1920s, tightly cropped portraits and self-images were widely practised documents of the 'New Vision' photography at the Bauhaus and throughout Eastern Europe. But in and around 1930, when Munch's vision was interrupted, the self-images offer a kind of extended sight. One can argue that they were replacements for the painting and graphic work on which the artist had spent less time due to his eye injury. Of course, there is despair communicated by photographs of an artist so dependent on his eyes whose vision is interrupted, particularly in those labelled with the term 'eye disease'. At the same time there is something humorous and playful – recreational – about Munch's private photographic practice. He used the camera as a device to picture himself sometimes directly and at others indirectly, but always performing.

Munch purchased his first camera, identified as the popular and portable Kodak Bulls-Eye No. 2, in February 1902 while living in Berlin. Among Munch's first images are those picturing himself, which he sent to his aunt, Karen



Figure 90 Hippolyte Bayard, *Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man*, 1840, direct positive print, 138mm x 127mm. Société Française de Photographie, Paris, inv. no. frSFP 00241M 006 H 001

Bjølstad, with the statement: ‘Here are two photographs taken with a little camera I procured – You can see that I have just shaved off my moustache.’²² The photographs were taken in Munch’s rooms in Berlin amid the paintings that he exhibited at the Berlin Secession along with a strategically placed palette (**Fig. 91**). In them, the artist is slightly out of focus, possibly due to the fact that he used his hat, pictured in his hand, to cover the lens following a time exposure. Arne Eggum conjectures the blurring can be accounted for by the act of moving before the camera to cover the lens.²³

When Munch held a one-man exhibition in Kristiania in September of that year, he seems to have recorded the occasion with photographs taken with his new camera. Two of the photographs are extant, both of which contain significant photographic errors. In one, some movement across the picture plane created a blur or light flare, veiling the gallery space. This one registers the cluttered table upon which the camera sat. In the other, whether the aperture and exposure time adjustments were set by Munch or a collaborator, the artist appears as a blur. The gallery is crowded and animated, with figures seated in the fore- and background and three men by the back wall (**Fig. 92**). Munch stands beside a large canvas, hands in his coat pockets, facing the camera. Perhaps having rushed to stand in place during the time exposure or having swayed laterally, Munch’s figure is indistinct. At the centre is a gentleman who, having moved during the time exposure, appears to have two right arms. Behind him is a man who has likewise moved while the lens was open, revealing an assembly of Munch’s prints through his translucent head. As these photographs are among the very few that were included in an album, one can imagine that they held

particular importance for the artist. Eggum suggests that the blurred self-portrait may have appealed to Munch’s discerning eye as a path towards his ongoing photographic practice.²⁴ As a ghost or a blur, his image undermined the documentary aspect of the image – of the artist and his work – and brought forth the potential for the artist to be in his work. Eggum notes that a cartoon in the satirical journal *Tyrihans* depicted Munch as a ghost haunting his own exhibition,²⁵ perhaps helping to magnify the effect of the artist as de-corporealised.

What possibly began in this way as a mistake when Munch moved from his fixed position became a repeated exploration of bodily transparency in his photography. Because the camera had options for both a ‘snapshot’ to stop action in beneficial illumination, and for a timed exposure to accommodate low light levels, the apparatus offered the opportunity for blurred or transparent subjects caught in motion. Chéroux names these ‘*effets pervers*’, or unintended consequences.²⁶ In self-portrait after self-portrait, Munch moved during timed exposures, resulting in an ongoing ghosting or dematerialisation of his body. In a photograph taken with his housekeeper in Warnemünde, Germany, around 1907, Munch is less physically palpable than the sofa on which he sits, and yet detailed clearly as though he timed his appearance and then ducked out of sight (**Fig. 93**). A photograph taken of two of his models in the same town appears to be a staged demonstration of ghosting, as the translucent figure in white addresses the stable model in the foreground. This photograph is associated with the many versions of the *Weeping Woman* motif that Munch produced from 1907 (**Fig. 94**).



Figure 91 Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait on a Valise in the Studio*, Berlin, 1902, collodion, print out paper, 79mm x 80mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00001-01

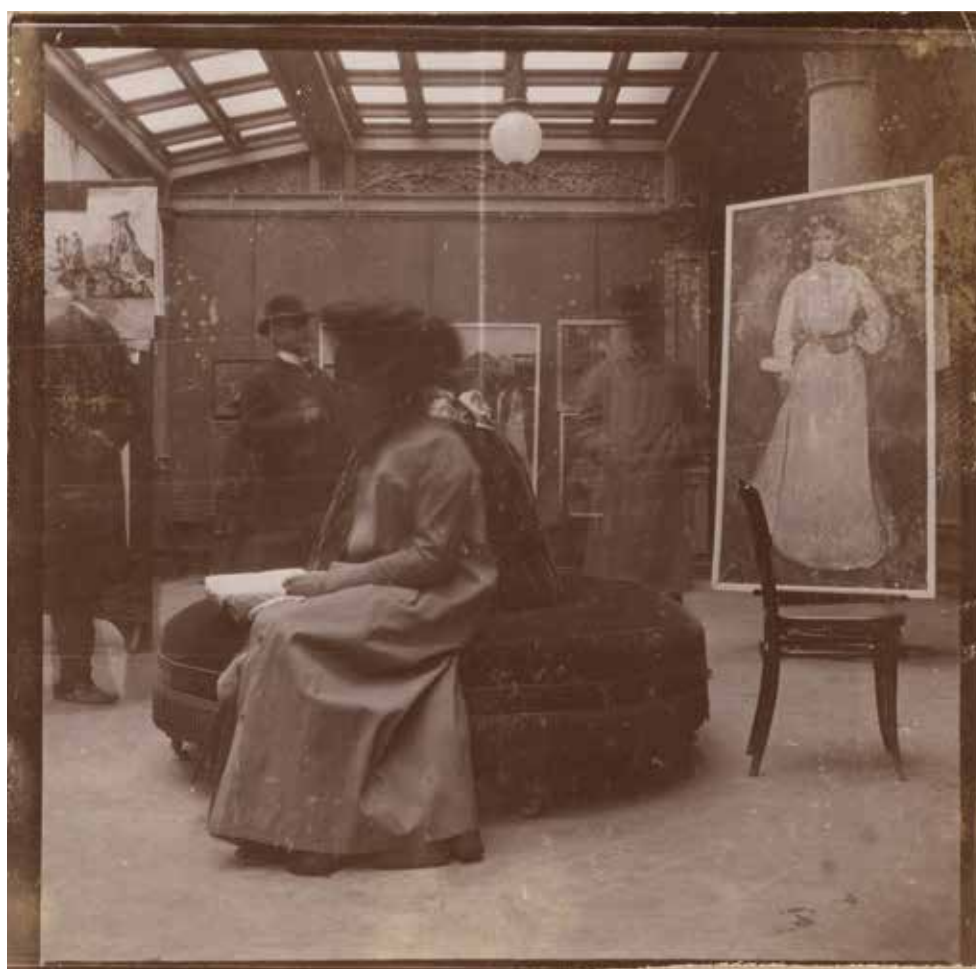


Figure 92 Edvard Munch's *Exhibition at Blomqvist, Kristiania*, 1902, collodion, print out paper, 87mm x 87mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00011-01



Figure 93 *Edvard Munch and his Housekeeper*, Warnemünde, 1907, collodion, print out paper, 86mm x 84mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00057-01

Beyond the external body

The effect of transparency was common in 19th-century photography, particularly in the years after small hand-held cameras, such as Munch's, were marketed, allowing anyone with modest means to own and use a snapshot camera and therefore to make mistakes. Mistakes and transparencies were widespread in studio photography too, in which an impatient subject moved during the course of a sitting, rendering them blurred, or, as in one of Munch's own family photographs, the vignetting or the lens's light fallout partly erased the figure – his mother – positioned at the edge of the frame (**Fig. 95**). Photography also materialised ghosts and spirits through double-printing or movement in time exposures. Eggum has suggested Munch's interest in spirit photography, including images such as those from William Mumler's studio in Boston, is likely to have shaped his photographic imaginary. The spiritualist movement was strong in Kristiania, according to Eggum, among whose adherents were the vicar of Munch's family's church, E.F.B. Horn, who defended spiritism and made positive claims for spirit photography, and those who attended a controversial seance by the so-called medium Henry Slade.²⁷ While living in Berlin, Munch is said to have borrowed, and read in one night, a book by Alexander Aksakov that offered 'proof' of spirit manifestations.²⁸ Aksakov had collected reports and anecdotes of spirit presences, and had previously published a series of articles in defence of spiritism that he gathered into

Figure 94 *Edvard Munch, Rosa Meissner at Hotel Rohn, Warnemünde*, 1907, silver gelatine, print out paper, 73mm x 85mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00059-01





Figure 95 *Edvard Munch as a Child*, 1864, 90mm x 54mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.D.02897-01. Photo by J. Lindegaard

two dense volumes accompanied by a very few photographs that he claimed were proof of invisible forces, an existence beyond the five senses.

Aksakov was one of a large field of researchers who attempted to separate the humbug (such as the discredited Mumler and Slade) from the scientific proof of phantom energies, London's Society of Psychical Research foremost among them. Ghosts were the stock-in-trade of middlebrow entertainment, offering both the frisson of pleasure in the supernatural and prompting novel technologies of vision and projection.²⁹ Even the player-piano evoked associations with the ghostly.³⁰ Tom Gunning's pioneering work demonstrates the entanglement of spirit photography with the rise of cinema and other popular entertainments, scientific investigations of invisibility and psychology.³¹ Gunning locates spirit photography and the appearance of spirits within the new media environment – such as cinema – of the turn of the century, 'their incongruous juxtaposition yield[ing] an eerie image of the encounter of two ontologically separate worlds ... Spirit Photographs portray a fissured space, one that allows visitors from another dimension to peek through, hovering within (or beyond), the space.'³² Moreover, as he points out, the coincidence of spirit photography, telegraphy and other technologies that render

invisible forces visible created a 'convergence of the scientific dematerialisation of the perceptual world with the possibility of its hypervisualisation via optical devices.'³³ Munch, he notes, operated within this broad endeavour to penetrate beneath the skin, exceed the body's limits and 'decompose the figure'.³⁴

Among these new technologies of the revelation of the invisible was the X-ray, the evidence of 'invisible realities' that reanimated ways of imagining and imaging ghosts.³⁵ The advent of the X-ray, argues Allen W. Grove, 'made people think about ghosts, they made people think about ghosts differently than before 1896. The new type of photography may indeed reduce a human to a ghostly skeletal image, but such a person is not a ghost in the way anyone had previously defined a ghost.'³⁶ X-rays ghosted the living body: 'as X-rays opened this door into the invisible, they also energised a new generation of ghosts – a generation released from the confines of past, free to roam the landscape with the apparent blessing of science.'³⁷

In 1902 Munch's hand was X-rayed following an altercation in which a bullet shattered one of his fingers (**Fig. 96**). The X-ray, made before surgery at Kristiania's Rikshospitalet, reveals the bullet lodged in his finger. X-rays of hands had become the most popular of 'invisible' motifs after Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen published his discovery of what he called 'X-rays' – 'a new kind of light' – in late 1896.³⁸ Working with a Crookes tube in his laboratory in Würzburg towards the end of 1895, Röntgen had noted an unknown form of radiation passing through opaque objects and leaving images on a fluorescent panel. Observing the shadow of his bones when he held his hand before the light source, he made a long-exposure image of his wife's hand,³⁹ sent copies of the photograph to eight journals to accompany his findings, and Anna Bertha Ludwig Röntgen's hand became one of the first X-ray images to gain global attention.⁴⁰ At the same time that X-rays began to enter into the field of medical diagnosis, 'Röntgen Rays' became a cultural phenomenon, prompting 'X-ray fever'. Within a short period, nearly 50 serious books and 1,044 articles had been published. Among them, X-rays were sumptuously aestheticised in the portfolio published in January 1896, within a month of Röntgen's announcement, by Austrian chemists Josef Maria Eder and Eduard Valenta. The photogravures included in *Versuche über Photographie mittelst der Röntgen'schen Strahlen* picture the inner structure of a variety of animals, a demonstration of the capacities of various materials to be penetrated by X-rays (**Fig. 97**). Three plates of human hands are also featured.⁴¹ X-ray slot machines enabling anyone to view their own skeletal hands for a coin, and X-ray demonstrations at fairs and in bourgeois parlours, were some of the ways in which 'the new kind of light' entered the everyday environment.⁴² Hands like those of Frau Röntgen, whether in the laboratory or at an entertainment venue, were familiar motifs.⁴³ Among the numerous creative consumers of X-rays was August Strindberg who, in pursuit of means by which he could penetrate the tangible 'natural' world, understood Röntgen's rays to have conjured the invisible, linking the observational and occult sciences.⁴⁴

Haunted memory; staged time

Munch's finger was wounded in September 1902 when he and his then-lover Mathilde 'Tulla' Larsen struggled in what was to be their last encounter. The details that led up to the firing of a .22 calibre revolver remain debated, but the unravelling relationship, the operation at Rikshospitalet, and the grievous and perpetual pain became a stain on Munch's reminiscences of Larsen and a central feature of his inner life for some years.⁴⁵ An increasing sense of instability, delusions of enemies in pursuit of him, overwork and alcohol abuse led Munch to seek treatment at Dr Daniel Jacobson's private clinic in Copenhagen. Living and working in the clinic, Munch was active as an artist and organiser of his career; he staged several photographs of himself and the nurses who cared for him, all the while writing to friends and in his notebooks, reiterating the gunshot, the perceived evil of Tulla. As Reinhold Heller recounts, Tulla was revised and dramatised as a person and an idea in Munch's writings,⁴⁶ and she appeared in barely veiled form in his work as an enemy and murderess, especially in paintings entitled *The Death of Marat* (**Fig. 98**). His best-known self-image from the clinic recapitulates, or re-creates or mimes, or perhaps parodies, his 'Marat' motif (**Fig. 99**). Naked but for a cloth draped over his hip, and positioned on a diagonal, taking advantage of the funnelling perspective caused by the proximity to the camera, Munch positioned himself next to a bathtub, perhaps associating himself with the dead Marat, and with his paintings of that theme.

In 1930, again experiencing bodily incapacity, with his eye damaged, Munch painted the series of images of Charlotte Corday, re-creating, or bringing forward, his earlier associational work. In a double exposure that is so dense with detail as to be nearly indecipherable, the artist documented the painting (**Fig. 100**). Around that year, Munch had been photographing his extensive collection of



Figure 96 X-ray of Munch's Hand Made at Rikshospitalet, 12 September 1902. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.D.02141. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård

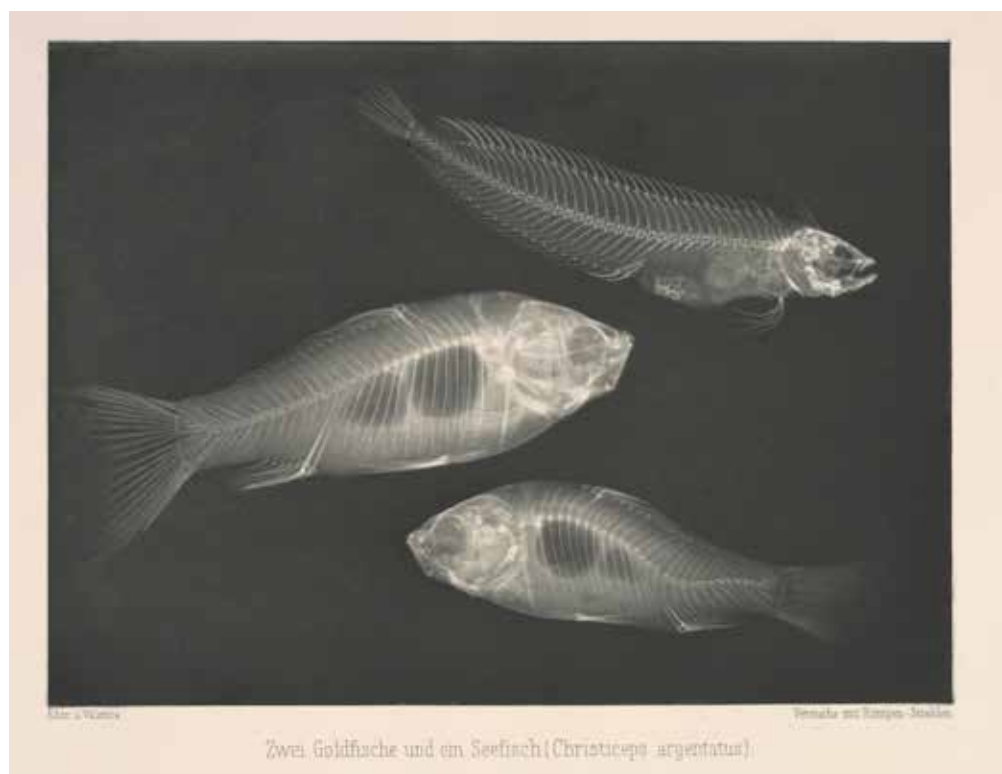


Figure 97 Josef Maria Eder and Eduard Valenta, *Zwei Goldfische und ein Seefisch (Christiceps argentatus)*, 1896, photogravure, 125mm x 166mm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2011.66.10. Purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, Joyce F. Menschel Photography Library Fund, and Maureen and Noel Testa Gift, 2011. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

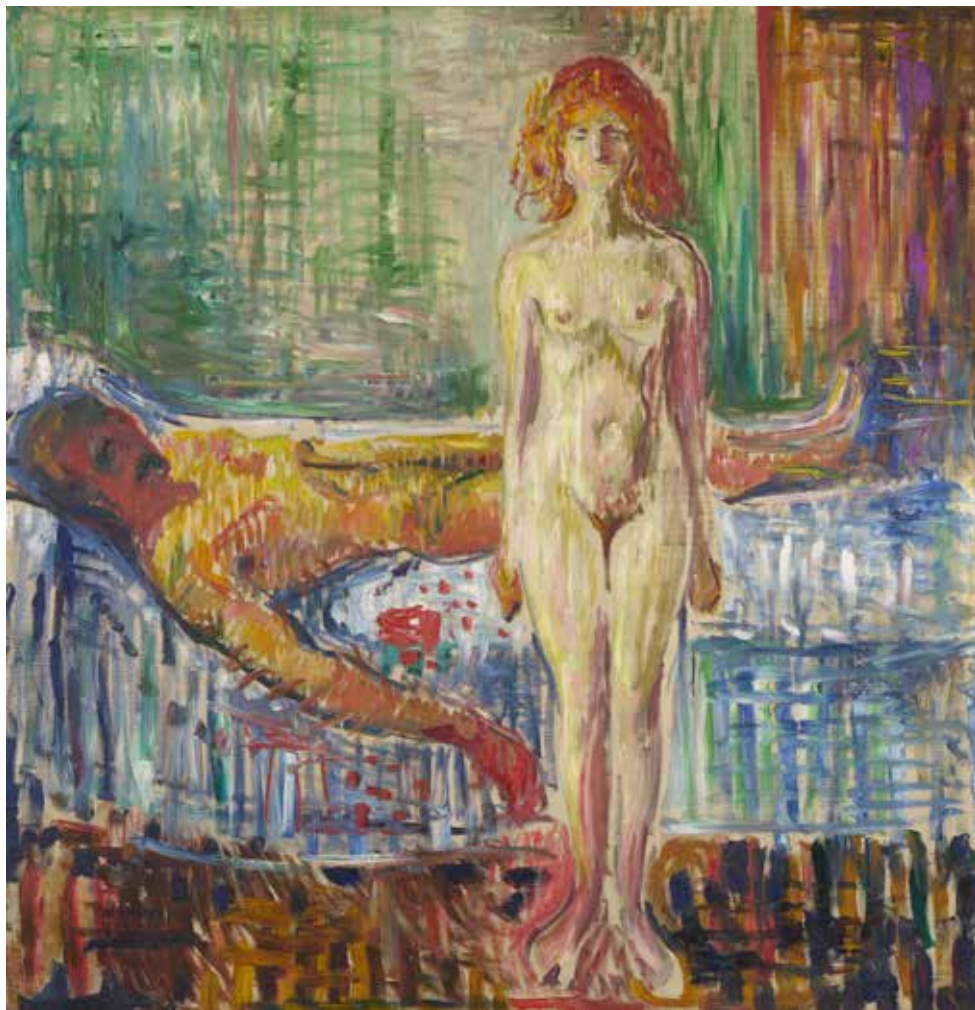


Figure 98 Edvard Munch, *The Death of Marat*, 1907, oil on canvas, 1530mm x 1490mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.M.00004. Photo by Juri Kobayashi



Figure 99 Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait à la Marat at the Clinic*, Copenhagen, 1908–9, silver gelatine, developing paper, 81mm x 85mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00071-01



Figure 100 Edvard Munch, *Double Exposure of 'Charlotte Corday', Ekely. C*, 1930, silver gelatine, developing paper, 102mm x 78mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00143-01

his own works with which he surrounded himself at his home and studio at Ekely.⁴⁷ Heller has written about Munch's endeavour to have himself photographed later in the 1930s, staging himself as the curator of his own legacy by collaborating with photographer Ragnvald Væring on the occasion of his 75th birthday (**Fig. 101**).⁴⁸ These images are anticipated from and required of documentary photography: they offer clarity of detail, a decipherable figure-ground relationship, a discernible perspective and a distinctive central focus for the image relation. Munch's documents of himself and of his works, such as the *Double Exposure of 'Charlotte Corday', Ekely. C*, offer none of these opportunities for reading or understanding. But they do offer something more compelling, which is a self-image lurking as a shadow at the bottom of the photograph. In almost all of Munch's documents of his collection, he is ghosted, smeared or fragmented across his paintings, prints

and drawings, including the 'sick eye' self-portrait in his wicker chair.

As noted by Erik Mørstad, Munch demonstrated a lifelong love of shadow play. Mørstad observed that the figure of a woman in the painting *Moonlight* (**Fig. 102**), for example, is accompanied by a shadow that does not correspond to her form.⁴⁹ The woman wears a hat, but what appears to be a dense shadow cast behind her displays a narrow profile at its apex and not a horizontal chapeau. The painting is full of reversals and subversions. It is a view of a woman *en face* standing before a fence behind which is a yellow house to the right and foliage to the left. At the lower left, a form intrudes that may or may not be the hint of an arm – another human presence – and which may or may not cast the shadow behind the woman. In *House in Moonlight*, probably painted in the same summer, a shadow emerging from the bottom of the canvas's edge is outlined in red,



Figure 101 Ragnvald Væring, *Edvard Munch in his Winter Studio, Ekely*, November or December 1938. Munchmuseet, Oslo

calling attention to itself as an assertively disquieting narrative element. Amorphous shadowed presences inhabit numerous works by Munch, including *Starry Night* (1893), and the revisitations of that earlier motif in the mid-1920s, *On the Veranda Stairs* (**Fig. 103**) and *Starry Night* (1922–3).⁵⁰ In some works, shadows occupy such a prominent position that they may be seen as independent characters. They are surely agents of perception and interpretation, perhaps no more so than in the motif *Puberty*,⁵¹ in which the shadow, the absence of light, becomes a palpable entity (**Fig. 104**).

A shadow without a corresponding material body is a formula for mystery or horror. William Chapman Sharpe identifies this type of shadow as ‘independent’, breaking free of its owner to operate autonomously.⁵² Both ‘there’ and ‘not-there’, the autonomous shadow has no substance yet powerfully calls attention to the lack.⁵³ Untethered from its ‘owner’, it is a disquieting doppelganger, ambiguous as an identity, as in Munch’s paintings of the veranda, or threatening, as in one of cinema’s most terrifying shadows in Friedrich W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*, released in 1922 (**Fig. 105**). As in his paintings, Munch also frequently substituted shadows for human presences in his photographs. Framing scenes with a light source at his back, and therefore casting shadows onto his manifest subjects (normally an ‘*effet pervers*’), Munch cannily inserted self-portrayals into pictures that seem to be about something else entirely. A shadow falling across the legs of the models Rosa and Olga Meissner in a photograph taken on the beach at Warnemünde, for example, explores the intersection of the



Figure 102 Edvard Munch, *Moonlight*, 1893, oil on canvas, 1405mm x 1370mm. National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Fine Art Collections, Oslo, NG.M.01914. Photo: Nasjonalmuseet/ Børre Høstland



Figure 103 Edvard Munch, *On the Veranda Stairs*, 1922–4, oil on canvas, 895mm x 770mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.M.00454. Photo by Sidsel de Jong, © Munchmuseet/ Munch-Ellingsen Gruppen/Bono

physical bodies of the models with the dematerialised and implied body of the artist (**Fig. 106**).

The printmaker as photographer

In 1902, in addition to his camera, Munch seems to have operated a portable Kodak home developing kit. This apparatus enabled the artist to explore photographic practice as another form of printmaking, perhaps as a recreation or a re-creational activity. Several of his photographic prints from the period between 1902 and 1910 hold his fingerprints, none more poignant than an image that he took of the backyard of his childhood home at Pilestredet 30 (**Fig. 107**). Due to the movement of the camera during the exposure time, the small yard is out of focus. Possibly an intentional use of mobility to blur the image, or perhaps the discovery of a poeticised view emerging from the developing tank, the photograph became in a sense a Symbolist print, and its subject – the building's outhouse – an object of associational and temporal displacement by an inscription on the back of the print: 'Outhouse window. 30–40 years old. Photograph of Pilestredet 30. A swan on the wall.'⁵⁴ On the beach in Warnemünde in 1907, Munch photographed himself with Rosa Meissner, double-printing the negative for effect and then flipping the negative, which holds his fingerprint in the emulsion, to create a mirror-imaged print. He had also created mirrored images from a reversed negative when he posed for his camera in a hotel room in 1906, moving during the time exposure so as to become partially translucent. These interruptions in the visualisation of a subject had all been strategies in his printmaking.

Figure 104 Edvard Munch, *Puberty*, 1894, oil on canvas, 1500mm x 1125mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.M.00281. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård





Figure 105 Film still from *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (*Nosferatu* ('A Symphony of Horror')), 1922, Germany, director: Friedrich W. Murnau. Photo 12 / Alamy Stock Photo



Figure 106 Edvard Munch, *Olga and Rosa Meissner on the Beach, Warnemünde*, 1907, collodion, print out paper, 89mm x 119mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00063-01

Munch began to make prints in 1894 while living in Berlin. His earliest work in graphic media was in intaglio, in which he quickly achieved virtuosity. He then took up lithography in 1895. One of his first forays was his *Self-portrait*, among the artist's most complex and literary of self-portraits, in which he represented his face emerging from a pool of absolute blackness and framed by a skeletal arm and his name as though carved in stone (**Fig. 108**).⁵⁵ Munch scratched the surface of his media on the lithographic stone, creating short vertical lines that run throughout the entire dark area of the print, interrupting the implied depth of the image and fixing the body both to surface and to

background. The lines, drawn into the layer of tusche, have the appearance of a fine netting and do not designate anything other than themselves. They are neither dense enough to lighten the effect of the background, as they do in many other of Munch's works, nor do they operate as formative elements of figuration. They do, however, serve to interrupt the image both materially and pictorially, subverting the figure/background relationship. We seem to look through a scrim or a veil at Munch's face, or perhaps through his image at the paper substrate, seeing 'as' and seeing 'in'.

The woodcut as model

Greater expressive liberties were taken with any notion of fictive pictorial space in Munch's woodcuts, which he began to produce while living in Paris in 1896. In them, Munch often chose to carve his wooden planks along the grain, emphasising the wood patterning as wood and also as a constitutive element in the motifs that he created. He also used a fretsaw to divide some of his blocks, colouring the pieces separately and then fitting them together like a jigsaw puzzle to print. In such a print as *Evening, Melancholy I* (Fig. 82), or a woodcut version of *Moonlight I* (Fig. 109), his figures bleed into the ground, making the image coalesce and dissolve into the physical matter of paper and ink, and with the imprint of wood. The woman's face is more detailed yet less palpable than its surrounding areas, so prominent is the wood graining. With its shadow play, doubling the physical with the amorphous, the double-printing of *Moonlight* – the wood striations and the subject of the woman, house and tree – reverses or subverts the expected hierarchy of selective attention, that provocative game of sight that Munch in turn explored in his photography. The variations in colour, paper and pressure on the matrices result in different capacities for the woman's face to be articulated or even fully present. Consequently, the shadow has greater presence than the woman herself as a bounded entity. In inking the striations of wood, or in laying down scratches on the inked surfaces of his lithographic prints, Munch dually made the medium of printmaking palpable and dematerialised his manifest subjects. Of Munch's woodcuts, *The Kiss III* is extraordinary for its economy of form of the two bodies melded into one and for the way in which the imprint of wood both frames and enters the bodies. In some impressions from an 1898 version of *The Kiss III*, the bodies dissolve into each other and into the wood patterning, as the pressure in the wood block was unevenly asserted across the woman's lower body (Fig. 110). It seems clear from the numerous experimental forays into taking and making photographs that Munch's distinctive practices within painted and graphic media – the scratching, scraping, layering, the interpolation of shadows in place of bodies, the interruptions – were funnelled into photographic experimentation.

There and not-there

Munch's layered, out of focus, blurred and occluded photographs – and the woodcuts that perhaps inspired them – carry in them the conundrum of seeing double, the impossibility of convergence between the translucent body and its surroundings. If we focus on the body *qua* body, we disregard the material surround and vice versa. Such translucency seems unremarkable, given the increasing occurrence of blurring in bungled amateur photography with the advent of the Kodak in 1888, followed by the artistic exploitation of the effect in Pictorialism and then, in the 1920s, in Surrealist and other modernist practices.⁵⁶ However, such photographic means, like the assertiveness of wood graining in Munch's woodcuts, trouble any ability to understand a figure in space, to seek visual convergence. Here I think of the 'duck-rabbit', a famously ambiguous image, which entered the field of perceptual psychology in the 1890s, first published as an optical trick in the German



Figure 107 Edvard Munch, *The Courtyard at Pilestredet 30B, Kristiania, 1902*, silver gelatine, developing paper, 87mm x 87mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.F.00015-01

satirical weekly *Die Fliegende Blätter* on 23 October 1892 (Fig. 111). William J.T. Mitchell calls the duck-rabbit a multi-stable or dialectical image, an 'auto-reference' to drawing *qua* drawing, a 'single gestalt' that shifts from one reference to another.⁵⁷ Its instability and oscillation from one emblematic form to another acts as a resistance to any easy reading as it calls forth the very operations of perception. As Mitchell notes, the anonymous illustration migrated from its initial publication as a parlour game into the field of perceptual psychology. American psychologist Joseph Jastrow enlisted it as an example of an ambiguous image whose interpretation turns on predisposition or 'fancy', as much as objective observation, as identification made in the 'mind's eye'. He included the illustration to align with his explanation for seeing spirits: 'what the objective factors lack in definitiveness the subjective ones supply.'⁵⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein adopted from Jastrow the ambiguous image in his *Philosophical Investigations* (published posthumously) as a way of describing two modes of seeing, the 'seeing that' and the 'seeing as', the thing seen as a rabbit or the thing interpreted as a representation of a rabbit or as a duck, or 'as a third thing, a duck-rabbit'.⁵⁹ The duck-rabbit as a problem in seeing, perceiving and describing became a staple of art historical pedagogy when Ernst Gombrich canonised it as a tool that unpacks the operations of picture reception itself.⁶⁰ Art historian Øystein Sjøstad terms this a form of 'sign-crossing', arguing that the interrupted surfaces of late 19th-century painting, with brushstrokes that appear to the eye to be daubs of paint – *taches* – and simultaneously as descriptive of the signified form, are like the 'duck-rabbit'.⁶¹ Like

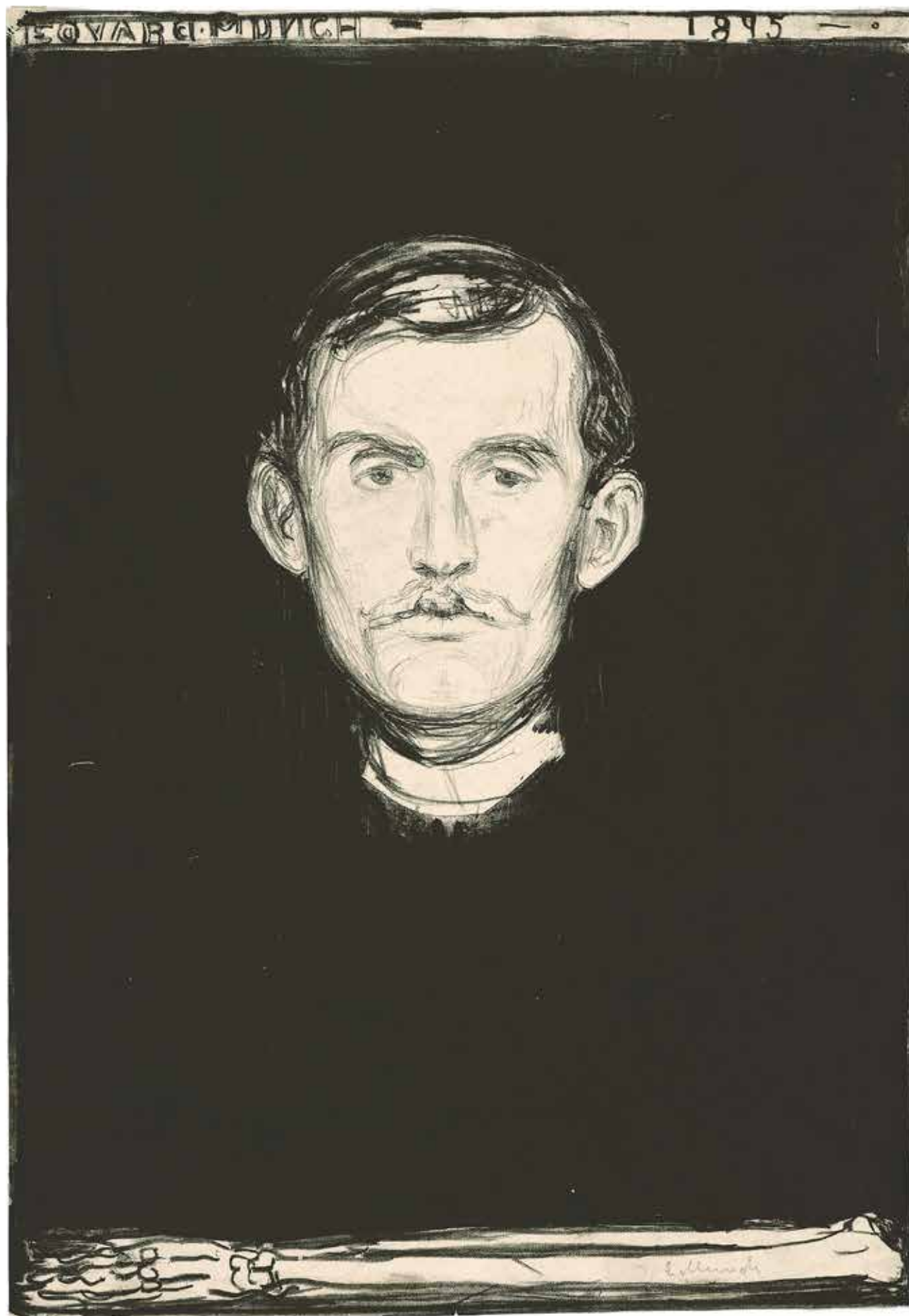


Figure 108 Edvard Munch, *Self-portrait*, 1895, lithograph, 460mm x 315mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00192-50. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård



Figure 109 Edvard Munch, *Moonlight I*, 1896, colour woodcut with gouges and fretsaw, 405mm x 470 mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00570-20. Photo by Halvor Bjørngård



Figure 110 Edvard Munch, *The Kiss III*, 1898, colour woodcut, 403mm x 458mm. Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM.G.00579-10. Photo by Ove Kvavik



Figure 111 *Die Fliegende Blätter*, 23 October 1892, 17 (<https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/fb97/0147>)

shadows that are or are not palpable, X-rays that reveal 'death in the living body', spirits that ooze into the physical world, the duck-rabbit is a *Vexierbild*, a dual form each of whose constituent halves vex the other.⁶²

Such interruptions or deformations in vision were important elements in Munch's practice. The artist made several disparaging remarks about photography, some of which have become his most famous aphorisms: 'The camera cannot compete with brush and palette – as long as it cannot be used in Heaven or Hell.'⁶³ It is therefore intriguing to think about Munch's photography as a counter-practice, perhaps mobilising the camera in the manner in which he also gradually and radically had transmuted the objectively observed world of material into the subjectively rendered realm of sensation in his paintings and prints. 'Nature is not the aim', Munch recorded in one of his notebooks, 'if one can obtain something by changing nature – it must be done.' What more subversive way to change nature than through the deformations that occurred in Munch's tiny, messy, privately made and maintained photographs? For an artist who transformed every medium that he explored, the objective photograph was an arena to subordinate from a technology of seeing to one of imagining and also remembering. Munch's counter-practice in photography held such ambiguity. We are so keen to seek the image that we may overlook, or not 'see as', the counter-intuitive practice of making surfaces not cohere. These strategies of interruption had already been present in Munch's paintings and prints, explored through multiple layers of paint, the insertion of shadows and the elision of figure and ground in his woodcuts. These entered into his photography as pressure points against anticipated practice as they had in his other media. In photography, given its association with temporality, they point to Munch's conception of the photographed moment as both timely and liminal, as himself as 'there' and 'not-there'.

In imagining the self, Munch was aware of the photograph as a retrospective enterprise, a rendering of 'what was'. 'I have an old camera with which I have taken

countless pictures of myself, often with amazing results', Munch stated in 1930. 'Someday when I am old, and I have nothing better to do than write my autobiography, all my self-portraits will see the light of day again.'⁶⁴ Munch's small experiments in photography – in his own dematerialisation and rematerialisation – were duck-rabbits. When he sat in that chair in 1930, his ghosted eye projecting inchoate forms that resolved into phantasms, he made a photograph that saw 'at' and saw 'in'. In their intervention into amateur photography as 'clear and factual', their renderings of time over material, gesture over stasis and knowing over seeing, these processions of practised error were astonishing.

Notes

- 1 On this, see Eggum 1978a, 11–31; Berman 1993, 627–46; Müller-Westermann 2005; Steihaug 2013, 13–23; Berman 2016, 80–96; Morehead 2017b, 21–30.
- 2 On the notion that objects carry histories and memories invested in their physical forms, see Kopytoff 1986, 64–94. On time as an element in Munch's photographs, see Berman 2020, 7–24.
- 3 Munch's photography has been the subject of significant study. See Schmoll Genannt Eisenwerth 1973, 187–226; Eggum 1989 (and numerous subsequent essays by Eggum); Buchhart 2007; Lampe and Chérout 2012; Holt 2013; Berman 2019, 42–55.
- 4 <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/recreation> (accessed June 2019).
- 5 This information, and what follows, is drawn from Ydstie 2012, 257–63.
- 6 Edvard Munch, note dated 2 June 1930, Munchmuseet, Oslo, T 2748, 59; translated in Ydstie 2012, 257–8.
- 7 Munch, notes on drawing, Munchmuseet, Oslo, T 2167; translated in Eggum 1989, 176–7.
- 8 Gamboni 2002, 86.
- 9 Ydstie 2012, 258.
- 10 Lanthomy 2012, 265–9.
- 11 On *The Sick Child*, see Eggum 1978b, 87–112; on the phenomenological dimensions of the painting, see Pedersen 2017.
- 12 Merleau-Ponty 1964, 178.
- 13 Mach 1914, 19.
- 14 See Cohen 1968, 136–7.
- 15 Mach 1914, 19–20.
- 16 Pop 2019.
- 17 Ydstie 2012, 259.
- 18 Edvard Munch, note, Munchmuseet, Oslo, MM N 305, p. 2, https://emunch.no/HYBRIDNo-MM_No305.xhtml#ENo-MM_No305-00-01r and sketchbook, Munchmuseet, Oslo, T 2761, 44v and 45r–46v; see https://emunch.no/TRANS_HYBRIDMM_T2761.xhtml (accessed 21 August 2020).
- 19 This observation made in Chérout 2012, 62.
- 20 Believing himself to have been the originator of a stable photographic image but passed over in favour of Daguerre's invention, Bayard sent a print and an explanatory note to the French Academy of Sciences: '... the unhappy man drowned himself. Oh! The fickleness of human affairs!' See Sapir 1994, 624.
- 21 See Dinius 2015, 445–51. Marcy Dinius notes that a 'selfie' as we understand the term requires that it be shared on a social media platform, and it can be said that Cornelius, a lamp-maker by trade and an amateur chemist, was an early adapter. See also Pappas 2020, 105–17.

- 22 Eggum 1989, 95.
- 23 Ibid., 97.
- 24 Ibid., 102–3. Cecilie Holt (2013, 227) reads these as ‘before’ and ‘after’ images, as at first this exhibition was not well attended until a hostile letter appeared in the newspaper *Aftenposten*, attracting a crowd.
- 25 Holt 2013, 227.
- 26 Chéroux 2013.
- 27 Eggum 1989, 32–5.
- 28 Ibid., 61. Aksakov 1890.
- 29 See Natale 2016.
- 30 The first prototype of an automated player-piano was invented in 1895 by Edwin Votey, and with improvements over the next decade, the roll piano offered ‘a ghostly rendition of human performance’. See Chang 2019.
- 31 Gunning 1995, 46–71. Together with Tom Gunning’s subsequent scholarship on the invisible, this work has been foundational to a number of publications that have reanimated the study of spirit photography. See, for example, Chéroux 2005.
- 32 Gunning 2007, 99.
- 33 Ibid., 115.
- 34 Gunning 2020, 57–72.
- 35 Grove 1997, 155.
- 36 Ibid., 165.
- 37 Ibid., 171.
- 38 Nickel 1999, 37.
- 39 Frizot 1998, 273, 280–1.
- 40 Kevles 1997, 9.
- 41 Eder and Valenta 1896. The entire portfolio may be viewed on the Metropolitan Museum website: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/296322> (accessed 21 August 2020). See also Gröning 2008, 65–72.
- 42 Kevles 1997, 20.
- 43 For example, a recent article reported that in 1896, Sarah Frances Whiting, a professor at Wellesley College (my home institution) and the first American woman to successfully create X-ray images, instructed her students to X-ray their own hands as a way of practising the new technology. Cameron and Musacchio 2020.
- 44 Greenway 1991, 29.
- 45 The most comprehensive analysis of this episode, from Munch’s point of view, is found in Høifødt 2010. A recent novel about Tulla Larsen brings to light the relationship between the two artists from Larsen’s perspective, in which the author makes the case that the multiple retellings of the relationship and of Munch’s wounding entered into the realm of myth: Teigen 2019.
- 46 Heller 1984, 174–81. Mai Britt Guleng has analysed the artist’s strategies of creative narration and fabulation; see Guleng 2011, 219–36.
- 47 Holt 2013, 226.
- 48 Heller 2017.
- 49 Mørstad 2003, 66–97.
- 50 Joan Templeton identifies the shadow that appears in these later paintings as belonging to Henrik Ibsen’s *John Gabriel Borkman*, the protagonist in the eponymous play of 1896. See Templeton 2008, 134–56. See also Coppel 2019, 111–13.
- 51 See Clarke 2012.
- 52 Sharpe 2017, 39.
- 53 Ibid., 65.
- 54 Eggum 1989, 105; Holt 2013, 195.
- 55 See Berman 2017, 75–95.
- 56 Van Alphen 2018; Chéroux 2013.
- 57 Mitchell 1994, 48.
- 58 Jastrow 1901, 295.
- 59 Wittgenstein 1958, 194.
- 60 Lycan 1971, 229–37.
- 61 Sjøstad 2013, 36–7.
- 62 Rugg 1997, 139.
- 63 Edvard Munch, ‘Livsfrisens Tilblivelse’, c. 1928, Munchmuseet, Oslo, UT 13, 1. See https://emunch.no/FACSIMILENo-MM_UT0013.xhtml (accessed 21 August 2020).
- 64 Munch, in an interview with Hans Tørsleff, 4 November 1930: Munch 1930, 42–4, translated in Chéroux 2012, 61.

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Index

Page numbers of illustrations are shown in *italic* text. Edvard Munch is abbreviated as EM in subheadings.

- Aksakov, Alexander 77–8
- Albert, Henri 19, 21
- Album des peintres-graveurs, L'* 31–2, 33
- Ancourt, Edward 26
- Artiste, L'* 22–3
- Aube, L'* 29–30, 31, 36 n.79
- Aurore, L'* 9, 11

- Bantens, Robert James 16 n.3
- Bayard, Hippolyte, *Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man*
(photograph, 1840) 74, 75
- Berlin
 - EM and Klinger 11–12, 13, 17 n.35
 - Meier-Graefe in 42
 - photographs 74–5, 84
- Bernard, Émile
 - Bretonnes* (woodcut, 1894) 40, 41
 - Passion, La* (zincograph, 1894) 46, 49
- Bever, Adolphe van 29
- Bonnard, Pierre 24, 25, 26, 35 n.50
 - Femme au parapluie* (lithograph, 1894) 24, 25
- Brandes, Georg 12

- Carrière, Eugène 5–11
 - manière noire* technique 6, 7, 7
 - panthéon* portraits 6–7, 7
 - women, portraits of 9–10, 9–12, 11
- Carrière, Eugène (works)
 - Amour Maternel, L'* (lithograph, 1904) 9–10, 10
 - Buste de jeune fille* (lithograph, 1890) 9, 9
 - Enfant Malade, L'* (oil, 1885) 6, 6
 - Marguerite Carrière* (lithograph, 1901) 9, 9
 - Maternité* (lithograph, 1899) 11, 12
 - Portrait of Edmond de Goncourt* (lithograph, 1896) 6, 7
 - Sommeil, Le* (lithograph, 1897) 7, 9
- Charcot, Jean-Martin 65, 65
- Chéroux, Clément 74, 75
- Clot, Auguste 3, 9, 31–2, 59
- colour
 - Angst* (lithograph, 1896) 31, 33
 - lithographic techniques 22, 55, 59
 - Sick Child, The* (lithographs, 1896) 2–3, 55, 56–60, 59
 - woodcuts 45, 46, 47
 - in *Ymagier, L'* 46, 48–9
- Corday, Charlotte 79
- Cottet, Charles, *Six bretonnes devant un pont* (lithograph, 1894)
25, 27
- Cri de Paris, Le* 26

- Degas, Edgar 6, 16 n.6
- Denis, Maurice 23, 24
- Diriks, Edvard 11
- diseases *see* sickness; syphilis
- doctors 60, 61–2, 62, 64–5, 65
- documentary photography 79, 81, 81–2
- Dolent, Jean 5

- duck-rabbit 85, 86, 88
 Duncan, Isadora 6–7
- Eder, Josef Maria and Eduard Valenta 78, 79
Épreuve, L' 23, 35 n.42
Estampe et l’Affiche, L' 22
Estampe Originale, L' 26
 exhibitions
 of EM 13, 19, 28–9
 of other artists 3, 13
- Faillet, Georges (Félicien Fagus) 22
 Fénéon, Félix 22, 27–8, 34 n.26
 Foucault, Michel 60
 Friedrich, Caspar David, *Mönch am Meer (Monk by the Sea)* (1808–10) 14
- Gauguin, Paul 10, 17 n.28, 17 n.31, 37, 39, 40
Gazette des Beaux-Arts 22
 ghosts 77, 78
 Gourmont, Remy de 18–19, 40, 42, 50
 Annonciation, L' (woodcut, 1895) 42, 44, 44
 Head of a Martyr (woodcut, 1894) 44, 46
- Hammer, Karl Vilhelm 19
 Hamsun, Knut 21
 Heiberg, Axel 9
 Heiberg, Gunnar 19
 Herrmann, Paul (Henri Héran) 59
 Hokusai, Katsushika 37, 39
 Horn, E.F.B. 77
- Ibels, Henri-Gabriel, *Paysanne au panier, La* (lithograph, 1894) 25, 26
 Ibsen, Henrik 19
 illness *see* sickness
Impressionisten 19
- Jæger, Hans 9, 13, 19
 Jarry, Alfred 40, 50
 Jastrow, Joseph 85
- Klinger, Max 11–16
 EM and 2, 5, 11–12, 12–16
 Klinger, Max (works)
 Erwachen (Awakening) (etching, 1887) 15, 16
 Gefesselt (Tied Up) (etching, 1884) 14, 15
 Leben, Opus VIII, Ein (A Life, Opus VIII) (1884) 13–15, 13, 15
 Liebe, Opus X, Eine (A Love, Opus X) (1887) 15, 16
 Paraphrase über den Fund eines Handschuhs (1881) 15
 Prefaccio II (etching, 1884) 15, 15
 Tod am Wasser, Der (Der pinkelnde Tod) (Death by the Water (Death Peeing)), 13
 Verlassen (Lost) (etching, 1884) 13, 14
- Kristiania 2, 13, 19, 77
 Krohg, Christian 6, 13, 19
 Albertine (novel, 1886) 14, 15
 Sick Girl (oil, 1881) 54–5, 55
- Larsen, Mathilde ‘Tulla’ 79
- Leclercq, Paul 22
 Lemerrier & Cie 7
 literature, Scandinavian 21
 lithographic techniques
 colour 22, 55, 59
 of EM 7, 7, 9, 44, 55, 59, 60, 84
 manière noire 6, 7, 7, 13
 Lugné-Poe, Aurélien 19, 28
- Mach, Ernst 72, 73
 Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen 72, 72
Maîtres de l’Affiche, Les 22
 Mallarmé, Stéphane 10–11, 30
 Marty, André 26
Matin, Le 9–10, 10
 Mauclair, Camille 29
 medical examination 60, 61–2, 62, 64–5, 65
 Meier-Graefe, Julius 11, 21, 28, 42
Mercure de France 19, 29, 30
 Munch, Edvard
 caricatures of works 19, 20
 clinic, living in 79, 80
 colour, use of 19, 31, 45, 46, 55, 59
 and Eugène Carrière 5, 6, 10–11, 17 n.31
 eye problem 68, 70, 71–2, 72–3
 finger, X-ray of 78, 79
 journals, works in 19, 20, 29–31, 31–2
 lithographic techniques of 7, 7, 9, 44, 55, 59, 60, 84
 and Max Klinger 2, 5, 11–12, 12–16
 painting techniques 72
 Paris, visits to 6, 18, 21, 30, 31, 32
 photographic self-portraits 73–4, 74, 75, 76–7, 79, 80
 portraits of women 8, 9, 15, 16, 82, 83
 print album, work in 31–2, 33
 reviews of 19, 29
 travel by 5, 11–12
 woodcuts 14, 14, 37, 38, 42, 44–6, 50, 68, 69, 85, 87
 X-ray photography 78, 79
- Munch, Edvard (works)
 Alley, The (lithograph, 1895) 14, 14
 Angst (lithograph, 1896) 31, 33, 44
 Angst (woodcut, 1896) 45, 50
 Anxiety (1894) 30
 Artist with a Skull; Study of his Afflicted Eye, The (watercolour, 1930) 68, 70, 71
 Artist’s Afflicted Eye, The (watercolour, 1930) 70, 72
 Courtyard at Pilestredet 30B, Kristiania, The (photograph, 1902) 83, 85
 Death in the Sickroom (1893) 19
 Death in the Sickroom (lithograph, 1896) 29, 30, 32
 Death of Marat, The (oil, 1907) 79, 80
 Double Exposure of ‘Charlotte Corday’ (photograph, 1930) 79, 81
 Edvard Munch and his Housekeeper (photograph, 1907) 75, 77
 Edvard Munch’s Exhibition at Blomqvist, Kristiania (photograph, 1902) 75, 76
 Encounter in Space (woodcut, 1898–9) 45
 Evening. Melancholy I (woodcut, 1896) 45, 46, 50, 68, 69, 85
 Evening on Karl Johan Street (1892) 19
 In the Hospital (lithograph, 1896) 62, 62

- House in Moonlight* (oil, 1893) 81–2
Inheritance (brush and wash, c. 1916) 62, 64, 64
Inheritance (crayon, c. 1897 or c. 1916) 62, 64
Inheritance (lithograph, c. 1916) 62, 64
Inheritance (oil, 1897–9) 62, 63
Jealousy (1895) 19
Kiss by the Window (1892) 19
Kiss III, The (colour woodcut, 1898) 85, 87
Madonna (1894–5) 19, 29
Madonna (lithograph, 1895) 8, 9, 19, 44
Madonna (lithograph, 1896) 29–30, 31, 36 n.79
Mallarmé (1897) 9
Man's Head in Woman's Hair (woodcut, 1896) 37, 38, 45, 46, 50
Mirror, The 12
Moonlight (oil, 1893) 81, 82
Moonlight I (woodcut, 1896) 45, 46, 50, 85, 87
Moonlight by the Sea (1912) 14
Mystical Shore (1897) 11
Olga and Rosa Meissner on the Beach, Warnemünde (photograph, 1907) 82–3, 84
On the Veranda Stairs (oil, 1922–4) 82, 83
Portrait of August Strindberg (lithograph, 1896) 7, 7, 9
Portrait of Hans Jæger (1896) 9
Portrait of Knut Hamsun (etching, 1896) 21
Puberty (etching, 1902) 15, 16
Puberty (oil, 1894) 15, 82, 83
Rosa Meissner at Hotel Rohn, Warnemünde (photograph, 1907) 75, 77
Rose and Amélie (1893) 30
Rue de Rivoli (oil, 1891) 73, 73
Scream, The (lithograph, 1895) 2, 10, 19, 20, 44, 45, 73
Scream, The (oil, 1893) 1, 29
Self-Portrait à la Marat at the Clinic (photograph, 1908–9) 79, 80
Self-Portrait at Ekely (photograph, 1930) 74, 74
Self-Portrait in the Studio at Ekely (photograph, 1930) 74, 74
Self-Portrait on a Valise in the Studio (photograph, 1902) 75, 76
Self-Portrait with Afflicted Eye (charcoal, 1930) vi, 3
Self-Portrait with Eye Disease (photograph, 1930) 68, 69
Self-Portrait with the Skeleton Arm (1895) 9, 84, 86
Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu (oil, 1919) 3, 68, 70
Sick Child, The (colour etching, 1896) 55, 56
Sick Child, The (colour lithographs, 1896) 55, 56–60, 59
Sick Child, The (drypoint, 1894) 6, 6, 29, 54
Sick Child, The (oil, 1885–6) 2–3, 6, 53, 72
Starry Night (1893) 82
Starry Night (1922–3) 82
Summer Night. The Voice (woodcut, 1896) 45, 50
Towards the Forest (woodcut, 1897) 14, 50
Two Human Beings: The Lonely Ones (woodcut, 1899) 14, 14
Vampire (1894) 19
Women in the Hospital (lithographs, 1896) 60, 61, 62

 'Nabis, Les' 23–4, 25, 26
 Natanson, Thadée 2, 19, 22, 23–6, 30
NIB 28, 29, 36 n.68
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 3
 Nilsen, Betzy 54

 optical illusions 85, 86, 88
 Oslo *see* Kristiania

PAN 21, 42
Paris à l'eau-forte 22
Peintres- Lithographes, Les 22–3
Perhinderion 32
 periodicals *see* journals
 photographs 3, 68, 73–88
 camera, EM on 88
 documentary photography 79, 81, 81–2
 self-portraits 68, 69, 73–4, 74–6, 75, 79, 80
 shadows 81–3, 82–4
 spirit photography 77–8
 transparent bodies 75, 76–8, 77
 X-ray photography 78, 79
 Pissarro, Camille 2
Plume, La 22, 27, 30–1
 portraits
 of men 6, 7, 7, 9, 21
 of women 8–12, 9–10, 11, 15, 16, 82, 83
 see also self-portraits
 posters 9–10, 10–11, 22
 print albums 22–3, 26, 31–2, 33, 35 n.59
 psychology 85

 Radiguet, Louis 30
 Rambosson, Yvanhoé 30–1
 Redon, Odilon 25, 27
 Renard, Jules 28, 29
Revue Blanche, La 18–32
 artists, encouragement of 22, 23–6
 British Museum acquisition 1
 cover 21, 21
 effect on career of EM 2, 29, 31, 32
 history 21
 literature and 21–2, 28
 lithographic supplements 28
 price and format 23, 35 n.43
 prints 24–5, 24–8, 26–7
 readership 19
 reviews of EM exhibitions 19, 29, 30
 Scream, The 19, 20
 Vallotton, Félix, work of 3
Revue indépendante, La 22, 23, 27–8
 Rippl-Rónai, József, *Woman Reading by Lamplight* (lithograph, 1894) 25, 25
 Röntgen, Wilhelm Conrad 78
 Roussel, Ker-Xavier 24, 24

 Salon des Cent 27
 Salon des Indépendants 30–1
 Scandinavian literature 21
 Schjerfbeck, Helene 3
 Schmitz, Oscar 30
 self-portraits
 history of 74, 75
 photographs 68, 69, 73–4, 74–6, 75, 79, 80
 Sérusier, Paul 25
 Marchande de bonbons, La 25

- Seurat, Georges, *Grande Jatte, La* (1884–6) 28
 shadows 81–3, 82–4
 Sharpe, William Chapman 82
 sickness 2–3, 52
 experienced by EM 53–4
 medical examination 60, 61–2, 62
 prevention of 9–10
 Sjøstad, Øystein 85
 Spilliaert, Léon 3
 Ecce Homo 3
 spirit photography 77–8
 Stephen, Julia, *Notes from Sick Rooms* 65
 Strindberg, August
 patient, identified as 62, 62
 portrait 7, 7, 9
 programme for *The Father* (1894) 28, 29
 review of EM exhibition 29, 30
 X-rays, enthusiasm for 78
 Symbolism 2, 9, 13, 19, 83
 see also Klinger, Max; *Ymagier, L'*
 syphilis 60, 61, 62, 63–4

 Thaulow, Frits 11
 Thiis, Jens 6
 Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri de 24–5, 26, 28, 30, 35 n.50, 36
 n.68
 Carnaval (lithograph, 1894) 25, 25
Tyrihans 19, 20

 Væring, Ragnvald, *Edvard Munch in his Winter Studio, Ekely*
 (photography, 1938) 81, 82
 Vallotton, Félix 3, 23–4, 26–7, 30, 32
 Intimités (1899) 3, 27

 programme for *The Father* (1894) 28, 29
 Trois baigneuses, Les (woodcut, 1894) 26, 28
 woodcuts 37, 39
 Vallotton, Félix and Jules Renard, '*Que les chiens sont*
heureux!...' (1895) 28, 29
 venereal diseases *see* syphilis
Vie Artistique, La 22
Vie Moderne, La 27
 Vollard, Ambroise 31, 32
 Vuillard, Édouard 24, 26

 Whistler, James Abbott McNeill 6, 16 n.6
 women
 Eve 15, 15
 medical examination of 60, 61, 62
 mothers 62, 63–4
 peasants 25, 26–7
 portraits of 8–12, 9–10, 11, 15, 16
 weeping woman motif 75, 77
 woodcuts
 broadside aesthetic 46, 48–9, 50
 early European single-sheet 37, 40
 by EM 14, 14, 37, 38, 42, 44–6, 50, 68, 69, 85, 87
 Ymagier, L' 2, 40, 40–4, 42, 44, 46, 48–9, 50
 Woolf, Virginia, *On Being Ill* 53, 62, 65

 X-ray photography 78, 79

Ymagier, L' 2
 aesthetics 42, 44, 46, 46, 48–9, 50
 influence on EM 32, 42, 50
 layout 40, 40–4, 42